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THE

WATER WITCH;

OR,

THE SKIMMER OF THE SEAS.

A TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE BORDERERS," "THE PRAIRIE,"

&c. &c.

" Mais, que diable alloit-il faire dans cette galère?"

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

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THE WATER WITCH.

CHAPTER I.

"I'll give thee a wind.
Thou art kind.
And I another.
I myself have all the other."

Macbeth.

THE cloud above the mouth of the Rariton had not risen. On the contrary, the breeze still came from off the sea, and the brigantine in the cove, with the cruiser of the Queen, still lay at their anchors, like two floating habitations that were not intended to be removed. The hour

was that at which the character of the day becomes fixed, and there was no longer any expectation that a land wind would enable the vessel of the free trader to repass the inlet before the turn of the tide, which was again running swiftly on the flood.

The windows of the Lust in Rust were open, as when its owner was present, and the menials were employed in and about the villa in their customary occupations; though it was evident by the manner in which they stopped to converse, and by the frequent conferences which had place in secret corners, that they wondered none the less at the unaccountable disappearance of their young mistress. In all other respects the villa and its grounds were, as usual, quiet and seemingly deserted.

But there was a group collected beneath the shade of an oak on the margin of the cove, and at a point where it was rare for man to be seen. This little party appeared to be in waiting for some expected communication from the brigan-

tine, since they had taken post on the side of the inlet next the cape, and in a situation so retired as to be entirely hid from any passing observation of those who might enter or leave the mouth of the Shrewsbury. In short, they were on the long, low and narrow barrier of sand that now forms the projection of the Hook, and which, by the temporary breach that the cove had made between its own waters and that of the ocean, was then an island.

"Snug should be the motto of a merchant," observed one of these individuals, whose opinions will sufficiently announce his name to the reader. "He should be snug in his dealings, and snug in his manner of conducting them; snug in his credits, and, above all, snug in his speculations. There is as little need, gentlemen, in calling the aid of a posse comitatus for a sensible man to keep his household in order, as that a discreet trader should go whistling through the public markets with the history of his operations. I gladly court two so worthy

assistants as Captain Cornelius Ludlow and Mr. Oloff Van Staats, for I know there will be no useless gossip concerning the trifling derangement that hath occurred. Ah! the black hath had communications with the free trader—always supposing the opinion of Mr. Ludlow concerning the character of the vessel to be just—and he is quitting the brigantine."

Neither of the companions of the Alderman made any reply. Each watched the movement of the skiff that contained their messenger, and each seemed to feel an equal interest in the result of his errand. Instead, however, of approaching the spot where his master and his two friends expected him, the negro, though he knew that his boat was necessary to enable the party to re-cross the inlet, pulled directly for the mouth of the river, a course that was exactly contrary to the one he was expected to take.

"Rank disobedience!" grumbled the incensed master. "The irreverent dog is deserting us on this neck of barren sand, where we are cut off

from all communication with the interior, and are as completely without intelligence of the state of the market, and other necessaries, as men in a desert!"

"Here comes one that seems disposed to bring us to a parley," observed Ludlow, whose practised eye had first detected a boat quitting the side of the brigantine, as well as the direction it was about to steer.

The young commander was not deceived, for a light cutter, that played like a bubble on its element, was soon approaching the shore, where the three expectants were seated. When it was near enough to render sight perfectly distinct, and speech audible without an effort, the crew ceased rowing, and permitted the boat to lie in a state of rest. The mariner of the India shawl then arose in the stern sheets, and examined the thicket behind the party with a curious and suspicious eye. After a sufficient search, he signed to his crew to force the cutter still nigher to the land, and spoke.

"Who has affairs with any of the brigantine?" he coolly demanded, wearing the air of one who had no reason to anticipate the object of their visit. "She has little left that can turn to profit, unless she parts with her beauty."

"Truly, good stranger," returned the Alderman, laying a sufficient emphasis on the latter word, "here are none disposed to a traffic, which might not be pleasing to the authorities of the country, were its nature known. We come with a desire to be admitted to a conference with the commander of the vessel, on a matter of especial, but private concern."

"Why send a public officer on the duty? I see one there in the livery of Queen Anne. We are no lovers of her Majesty's servants, and would not willingly form disagreeable acquaintances."

Ludlow nearly bit through his lip, in endeavouring to repress his anger at the cool confidence of one, who had already treated him with so little ceremony; and then momentarily forget-

ting his object in professional pride, and perhaps we might add, in the habits of his rank, he interrupted the dialogue—

"If you see the livery of the royal authority," he said, haughtily, "you must be sensible it is worn by one who is commissioned to cause its rights to be respected. I demand the name and character of yon brigantine?"

"As for character, she is, like any other beauty, something vituperated; nay, some carry their envy so far, as to call it cracked! But we are jolly mariners that sail her, and little heed crazy reports at the expense of our mistress. As for a name, we answer any hail that is fairly spoken and well meant. Call us 'Honesty' if you will, for want of the register."

"There is much reason to suspect your vessel of illegal practices, and in the name of the Queen, I demand access to her papers, and the liberty of a free search into her cargo and crew. Else will there be necessity to bring her under

the guns of the cruiser, which lies at no great distance, waiting only for orders."

"It takes no scholar to read our documents, Captain Ludlow, for they are written by a light keel on the rolling waters, and he who follows in our wake, may guess at their authority. If you wish to overhaul our cargo, you must look sharply into the cuffs and aprons, the negligées and stomachers of the Governor's lady, at the next ball at the fort; or pry into the sail that is set above the farthingales of the wife and daughters of your Admiralty Judge! We are no cheesemongers, to break the shins of a boarding officer, among boxes and butter-tubs."

"Your brigantine has a name, sirrah, and in her Majesty's authority I demand to know it?"

"Heaven forbid that any here should dispute the Queen's right! You are a seaman, Captain Ludlow, and have an eye for comeliness in a craft, as well as in a woman. Look at those harpings! There is no fall of a shoulder can

equal that curve in grace or richness; this sheer surpasses the justness and delicacy of any waist; and there you see the transoms, swelling and rounded like the outlines of a Venus. Ah! she is a bewitching creature, and no wonder that, floating as she does on the seas, they should have called her—"

"Water Witch!" said Ludlow, finding that the other paused.

"You deserve to be one of the sisterhood yourself, Captain Ludlow, for this readiness in divination!"

"Amazement and surprise, Patroon!" exclaimed Myndert, with a tremendous hem. "Here is a discovery to give a respectable merchant more uneasiness than the undutiful conduct of fifty nieces! This vessel is then the famous brigantine of the notorious Skimmer of the Seas, a man whose misdeeds in commerce are as universally noted, as the stoppage of a general dealer! Pray, Master Mariner, do not distrust our purposes. We do not come, sent

by any authority of the country, to pry into your past transactions, of which it is quite unnecessary for you to speak, and far less to indulge in any unlawful thirst of gain, by urging a traffic that is forbidden by the law. We wish solely to confer with the celebrated free trader and rover, who must, if your account be true, command the vessel, for a few minutes, on an affair of common interest to the three. This officer of the Queen is obliged, by his duty, to make certain demands of you, with which you will comply or not, at your own good discretion; and since her Majesty's cruiser is so far beyond reach of bullet, it cannot be expected you will do otherwise; but further than that, he has no present intention to proceed. Parlies and civilities! Captain Ludlow, we must speak the man fair or he will leave us to get over the inlet, and back to the Lust in Rust as we may, and that, too, as empty handed as we came. Remember our stipulations, without observing which I shall withdraw from the adventure altogether."

Ludlow bit his lip and continued silent. The seaman of the shawl, or Master Tiller, as he has been more than once called, again narrowly examined the back-ground, and caused his boat to approach so near the land, that it was possible to step into it by the stern.

"Enter," he said to the captain of the Coquette, who needed no second invitation; "enter, for a valuable hostage is a safe pledge in a truce. The Skimmer is no enemy to good company, and I have done justice to the Queen's servitor, by introducing him already by name and character."

"Fellow, the success of your deception may cause you to triumph, for a time, but remember that the Coquette—"

"Is a wholesome boat, whose abilities I have taken, to the admeasurement of her moment glass," observed Tiller, very coolly taking the words out of the other's mouth. "But as there is business to be done with the Skimmer, we will speak more of this anon."

The mariner of the shawl, who had maintained his former audacious demeanour, now became grave, and he spoke to his crew with authority, bidding them pull the boat to the side of the brigantine.

The exploits, the mysterious character, and the daring of the Water Witch, and of him who sailed her, were, in that day, the frequent subjects of anger, admiration and surprise. Those who found pleasure in the marvellous, listened to the wonders that were recounted of her speed and boldness, with pleasure; they who had been so often foiled in their attempts to arrest the hardy dealers in contraband, reddened at her name; and all wondered at the success and intelligence with which her movements were controlled. It will, therefore, create no astonishment when we say, that Ludlow and the Patroon drew near to the light and graceful fabric, with an interest that deepened at each stroke of the oars. So much of a profession which, in that age, was particularly marked and

apart from the rest of mankind, in habits and opinions, had been interwoven into the character of the former, that he could not see the just proportions, the graceful outlines of the hull, or the exquisite symmetry and neatness of the spars and rigging, without experiencing a feeling somewhat allied to that which undeniable superiority excites in the heart of even a rival. There was also a taste in the style of the merely ornamental parts of the delicate machine, which caused as much surprise as her model and rig.

Seamen in all ages, and in every state of their art, have been ambitious of bestowing on their floating habitations a style of decoration which, while appropriate to their element, should be thought somewhat analogous to the architectural ornaments of the land. Piety, superstition, and national usages affect these characteristic ornaments, which are still seen, in different quarters of the world, to occasion broad distinctions between the appearances of vessels. In one, the rudder-head is carved with the resemblance

of some hideous monster; another shows goggling eyes and lolling tongues from its cat-heads; this has the patron saint, or the ever kind Marie embossed upon its mouldings or bows, while that is covered with the allegorical emblems of country and duty. Few of these efforts of nautical art are successful, though a better taste appears to be gradually redeeming even this branch of human industry from the rubbish of barbarism, and to be elevating it to a state which shall do no violence to the more fastidious opinions of the age. But the vessel of which we write, though constructed at so remote a period, would have done credit to the improvements of our own time.

It has been said that the hull of this celebrated smuggler was low, dark, moulded with exquisite art, and so justly balanced as to ride upon its element like a sea-fowl. For a little distance above the water, it shewed a blue that vied with the colour of the deep ocean, the use of copper being then unknown, while the more

superior parts were of a jet-black, delicately relieved by two lines, of a straw-colour, that were drawn, with mathematical accuracy, parallel to the plane of her upper works, and consequently converging slightly towards the sea, beneath her counter. Glossy hammock-cloths concealed the persons of those who were on the deck, while the close bulwarks gave the brigantine the air of a vessel equipped for war. Still the eye of Ludlow ran curiously along the whole extent of the two straw-coloured lines, seeking in vain some evidence of the weight and force of her armament. If she had ports at all, they were so ingeniously concealed, as to escape the keenest of his glances. The nature of the rig has been already described. Partaking of the double character of brig and schooner—the sails and spars of the forward mast being of the former, while those of the after-mast were of the latter construction—seamen have given to this class of shipping, the familiar name of Hermaphrodites. But though there might be fan-

cied, by this term, some want of the proportions that constitute seemliness, it will be remembered that the departure was only from some former rule of art, and that no violence had been done to those universal and permanent laws which constitute the charm of nature. The models of glass, which are seen representing the machinery of a ship, are not more exact or just in their lines, than were the cordage and spars of this brigantine. Not a rope varied from its true direction; not a sail, but it resembled the neat folds of some prudent housewife; not a mast or a yard was there, but it rose into the air, or stretched its arms, with the most fastidious attention to symmetry. All was airy, fanciful and full of grace, seeming to lend to the fabric a character of unreal lightness and speed. As the boat drew near her side, a change of the air caused the buoyant bark to turn, like a vane, in its current, and as the long and pointed proportions of her head-gear came into view, Ludlow saw beneath the bowsprit an image that might

be supposed to make, by means of allegory, some obvious allusions to the character of the vessel. A female form, fashioned with the carver's best skill, stood on the projection of the cut-water. The figure rested lightly on the ball of one foot, while the other was suspended in an easy attitude, resembling the airy posture of the famous Mercury of the Bolognese. The drapery was fluttering, scanty, and of a light sea-green tint, as if it had imbibed a hue from the element beneath. The face was of that dark bronzed colour which human ingenuity has from time immemorial adopted as the best medium to pourtray a superhuman expression. The locks were dishevelled, wild, and rich, the eye full of such a meaning as might be fancied to glitter in the organs of a sorceress, while a smile so strangely meaning and malign played about the mouth, that the young sailor started, when it first met his view, as if a living thing had returned his look.

"Witchcraft and necromancy!" grumbled

the Alderman, as this extraordinary image came suddenly on his vision also. "Here is a brazen looking hussy! and one who might rob the Queen's treasury itself without remorse! Your eyes are young, Patroon; what is it that the minx holds so impudently above her head?"

"It seems an open book, with letters of red written on its pages. One need not be a conjuror, to divine it is no extract from the bible."

"Nor from the statute books of Queen Anne. I warrant me, 'tis a ledger of profit gained in her many wanderings. Goggling and leers! the bold air of the confident creature is enough to put an honest man out of countenance!"

"Wilt read the motto of the Witch?" demanded he of the India shawl, whose eye had been studying the detail of the brigantine's equipment, rather than attending to the object which so much attracted the looks of his companions. "The night-air has taut'ned the cordage of that flying-jib-boom, fellows, until

it begins to lift its nose like a squeamish cockney, when he holds it over salt-water! See to it, and bring the spar in line; else shall we have a reproof from the sorceress, who little likes to have any of her limbs deranged. Here, gentlemen, the opinions of the lady may be read, as clearly as woman's mind can ever be fathomed."

While speaking to his crew, Tiller had changed the direction of the boat, and it was soon lying, in obedience to a motion of his hand, directly beneath the wild and significant-looking image just described. The letters in red were now distinctly visible, and when Alderman Van Beverout had adjusted his spectacles, each of the party read the following sentence:—

> "Albeit I neither lend nor borrow,
> By taking nor by giving of excess,
> Yet to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
> I'll break a custom."
>
> *Merchant of Venice.*

"The brazen!" exclaimed Myndert, when he had got through this quotation from the immor-

tal bard. "Ripe or green, one could not wish to be the friend of so impudent a thing; and then to impute such sentiments to any respectable commercial man, whether of Venice, or of Amsterdam! Let us board the brigantine, friend mariner, and end the connection, ere foul mouths begin to traduce our motives for the visit."

"The over-driven ship ploughs the seas too deep for speed; we shall get into port in better season, without this haste. Wilt take another look into the dark lady's pages? A woman's mind is never known at the first answer!"

The speaker raised the rattan he still carried, and caused a page of painted metal to turn on hinges that were so artfully concealed as not to be visible. A new surface, with another extract, was seen.

"What is it, what is it, Patroon?" demanded the burgher, who appeared greatly to distrust the discretion of the sorceress. "Follies and rhymes! but this is the way of the whole

sex; when nature has denied them tongues, they invent other means of speech."

"Porters of the sea and land,
Thus do go, about, about;
Thrice to thine, and thrice to thine,
And thrice again to make up nine."

"Rank nonsense!" continued the burgher, "it is well for those who can, to add thrice and thrice to their stores, but look you, Patroon, it is a thriving trade that can double the value of the adventure, and that with reasonable risks, and months of patient watching."

"We have other pages," resumed Tiller, "but our affairs drag for want of attending to them. One may read much good matter in the book of the sorceress, when there is leisure and opportunity. I often take occasion in the calms to look into her volume, and it is rare to find the same moral twice told, as these brave seamen can swear."

The mariners at the oars confirmed this assertion by their grave and believing faces, while

their superior caused the boat to quit the place, and the image of the Water Witch was left floating in solitude above her proper element.

The arrival of the cutter produced no sensation among those who were found on the deck of the brigantine. The mariner of the shawl welcomed his companions, frankly and heartily, and then he left them for a minute to make their observations, while he discharged some duty in the interior of the vessel. The moments were not lost, as powerful curiosity induced all of the visitors to gaze about them, in the manner in which men study the appearance of any celebrated object that has long been known only by reputation. It was quite apparent that even Alderman Van Beverout had penetrated farther into the mysteries of the beautiful brigantine, than he had ever before been. But it was Ludlow who gathered most from this brief opportunity, and whose understanding glances so rapidly and eagerly ran over all that a seaman could wish to examine.

An admirable neatness reigned in every part. The planks of the deck resembled the work of the cabinet-maker, rather than the coarser labour which is generally seen in such a place, and the same excellence of material and exactness in the finish, were visible in the ceilings of the light bulwarks, the railings, and all the other objects which necessarily came conspicuously into view, in the construction of such a fabric. Brass was tastefully, rather than lavishly used, on many of those parts where metal was necessary, and the paint of the interior was every where a light and delicate straw-colour. Armament there was none, or at least none visible, nor did the fifteen or twenty grave-looking seamen, who were silently lounging with folded arms about the vessel, appear to be those who would find pleasure in scenes of violence. They were, without an exception, men who had reached the middle age of weather-worn and thoughtful countenances, many of them even shewing heads that had begun to

be grizzled more by time than even by exposure. Thus much, Ludlow had been enabled to ascertain ere they were rejoined by Tiller. When the latter again came on deck, he showed however no desire to conceal any of the perfection of his habitation.

"The wilful sorceress is no niggard in accommodating her followers," said the mariner, observing the manner in which the Queen's officer was employed. "Here, you see, the Skimmer keeps room enough for an admiral in his cabins, and the fellows are berth'd aft, far beyond the foremast,—wilt step to the hatch, and look below?"

The captain and his companions did as desired, and to the amazement of the former, he perceived that with the exception of a sort of room fitted with large and water-tight lockers, which were placed in full view, all the rest of the brintine was occupied by the accommodations of her officers and crew.

"The world gives us the reputation of free-

traders," continued Tiller, smiling maliciously; "but if the Admiralty court was here, big wigs and high staffs, judge and jury, it would be at a loss to bring us to conviction. There is iron to keep the lady on her feet, and water, with some garnish of Jamaica, and the wines of old Spain and the islands, to cheer the hearts and cool the mouths of my fellows, beneath that deck, and more than that there is not. We have stores for the table and the breeze, beyond yon bulk-head, and here are lockers beneath you, that are — empty! See, one is open; it is neat as any draw in a lady's bureau. This is no place for your Dutchman's strong waters, or the coarse skins of your tobacconist. Odd's my life! he who would go on the scent of the Water Witch's lading, must follow your beauty in her satins, or your parson in his band and gown. There would be much lamentation in the church, and many a heavy hearted bishop, were it known that the good craft had come to harm."

"There must be an end to this audacious trifling with the law," said Ludlow, "and the time may be nearer than you suppose."

"I look at the pages of the lady's book, in the pride of each morning; for we have it aboard here, that when she intends to serve us foul, she will at least be honest enough to give a warning. The mottos often change, but her words are ever true. 'Tis hard to overtake the driving mist, Captain Ludlow, and he must hold good way with the wind itself, who wishes to stay long in our company."

"Many a boastful sailor has been caught. The breeze that is good for the light of draught, and the breeze that is good for the deep keel, are different. You may live to learn what a stout spar, a wide arm, and a steady hull can do."

"The lady of the wild eye and wicked smile protect me! I have seen the Witch buried fathoms deep in brine, and the glittering water falling from her tresses like golden stars, but

never have I read an untruth in her pages. There is good intelligence between her and some on board; and, trust me, she knows the paths of the ocean too well ever to steer a wrong course. But we prate like gossipping river-men. Wilt see the Skimmer of the Seas?"

"Such is the object of our visit," returned Ludlow, whose heart beat violently at the name of the redoubtable rover. "If you are not he, bring us where he is."

"Speak lower; if the lady under the bow-sprit hear such treason against her favourite, I'll not answer for her good-will. If I am not he!" added the hero of the India shawl, laughing freely. "Well, an ocean is bigger than a sea, and a bay is not a gulf. You shall have an opportunity of judging between us, noble captain, and then I leave opinions to each man's wisdom. Follow."

He quitted the hatchway, and led his companions toward the accommodations in the stern of the vessel.

CHAPTER II.

"God save you, Sir!
And you, Sir; you are welcome.
Travel you, Sir, or are you at the furthest?"
Taming of the Shrew.

If the exterior of the brigantine was so graceful in form and so singular in arrangement, the interior was still more worthy of observation. There were two small cabins beneath the main deck, one on each side of and immediately adjoining the limited space that was destined to receive her light but valuable cargoes. It was into one of these that Tiller had descended, like a man who freely entered into his own apart-

ment; but partly above, and nearer to the stern, were a suite of little rooms that were fitted and furnished in a style altogether different. The equipments were those of a yacht, rather than those which might be supposed suited to the pleasures of even the most successful dealer in contraband.

The principal deck had been sunken several feet, commencing at the aftermost bulk-head of the cabins of the subordinate officers, in a manner to give the necessary height, without interfering with the line of the brigantine's sheer. The arrangement was consequently not to be seen by an observer who was not admitted into the vessel itself. A descent of a step or two, however, brought the visitors to the level of the cabin floor, and into an ante-room, that was evidently fitted for the convenience of the domestics. A small silver hand-bell lay on a table, and Tiller rung it lightly, like one whose ordinary manner was restrained by respect. It was answered by the appearance of a boy, whose

years could not exceed ten, and whose attire was so whimsical as to merit description.

The material of the dress of this young servitor of Neptune, was a light rose-coloured silk, cut in a fashion to resemble the habits formerly worn by pages of the great. His body was belted by a band of gold, a collar of fine thread lace floated on his neck and shoulders, and even his feet were clad in a sort of buskins, that were ornamented with fringes of real lace and tassels of bullion. The form and features of the child were delicate, and his air as unlike as possible to the coarse and brusque manner of a vulgar ship-boy.

"Waste and prodigality!" muttered the Alderman, when this extraordinary little usher presented himself, in answer to the summons of Tiller. "This is the very wantonness of cheap goods and an unfettered commerce! There is enough of mechlin, Patroon, on the shoulders of that urchin to deck the stomacher of the Queen. 'Fore George, goods were cheap in the

market, when the young scoundrel had his livery?"

The surprise was not confined, however, to the observant and frugal burgher. Ludlow and Van Staats of Kinderhook manifested equal amazement, though their wonder was exhibited in a less characteristic manner. The former turned short to demand the meaning of this masquerade, when he perceived that the hero of the Indian shawl had disappeared. They were then alone with the fantastic page, and it became necessary to trust to his intelligence for directions how to proceed.

"Who art thou, child? and who has sent thee hither?" demanded Ludlow. The boy raised a cap of the same rose-coloured silk, and pointed to an image of a female, with a swarthy face and a malign smile, painted with exceeding art on its front.

"I serve the sea-green lady, with the others of the brigantine."

"And who is this lady of the colour of shal-

low water, and whence come you in particular?"

"This is her likeness,—if you would speak with her, she stands on the cut-water, and rarely refuses an answer."

"'Tis odd that a form of wood should have the gift of speech!"

"Dost think her then of wood?" returned the child, looking timidly, and yet curiously, up into the face of Ludlow. "Others have said the same, but those who know best deny it. She does not answer with a tongue, but the book has always something to say."

"Here is a grievous deception practised on the superstition of this boy! I have read the book, and can make but little of its meaning."

"Then read again. 'Tis by many reaches that the leeward vessel gains upon the wind. My master has bid me bring you in—"

"Hold—thou hast both master and mistress. You have told us of the latter, but we would know something of the former. Who is thy master?"

The boy smiled, and looked aside, as if he hesitated to answer.

"Nay, refuse not to reply. I come with the authority of the Queen."

"He tells us that the sea-green lady is our Queen, and that we have no other."

"Rashness and rebellion!" muttered Myndert; "but this fool-hardiness will one day bring as pretty a brigantine as ever sailed in the narrow seas to condemnation, and then will there be rumours abroad, and characters cracked, till every lover of gossip in the Americas shall be tired of defamation."

"It is a bold subject that dares say this!" rejoined Ludlow, who heeded not the by-play of the Alderman; "your master has a name?"

"We never hear it. When Neptune boards us under the tropics, he always hails the Skimmer of the Seas, and then they answer. The old god knows us well, for we pass his latitude oftener than other ships they say."

"You are then a cruiser of some service in

the brigantine—no doubt you have trod many distant shores, belonging to so swift a craft?"

"I!—I never was on the land!" returned the boy, thoughtfully. "It must be droll to be there; they say, one can hardly walk it is so steady! I put a question to the sea-green lady before we came to this narrow inlet to know when I was to go a-shore."

"And she answered?"

"It was some time first. Two watches were past before a word was to be seen, but at last I got the lines. I believe she mocked me, though I have never dared show it to my master, that he might say."

"Hast the words here? perhaps we might assist thee, as there are some among us who know most of the sea-paths."

The boy looked timidly and suspiciously around, and thrusting a hand hurriedly into a pocket, he drew forth two bits of paper, each of which contained a scrawl, and both of which had evidently been much thumbed and studied.

"Here," he said, in a voice that was suppressed nearly to a whisper, "this was on the first page. I was so frightened lest the lady should be angry, that I did not look again till the next watch, and then," turning the leaf, "I found this."

Ludlow took the bit of paper first offered, and read, written in a child's hand, the following extract—

> "I pray thee
> Remember, I have done thee worthy service;
> Told thee no lies, made no mistakings, serv'd
> Without or grudge, or grumblings."

"I thought that was in mockery," continued the boy, when he saw by the eye of the young captain, that he had read the quotation; "for 'twas very like, though more prettily worded, than that which I had said myself!"

"And that was the second answer?"

"This was found in the first morning-watch," the child returned, reading the second extract himself.

" ' Thou think'st
It much to tread the ooze of the salt deep,
And run upon the sharp wind of the north.'

"I never dared to ask again. But what matters that! They say the ground is rough, and difficult to walk on; that earthquakes shake it, and make holes to swallow cities; that men slay each other on the highways for money, and that the houses I see on the hills must always remain in the same spot. It must be very melancholy to live always in the same spot; but then it must be odd never to feel a motion!"

"Except the occasional rocking of an earthquake! Thou art better afloat, child;—but thy master, this Skimmer of the Seas—"

"Hist!" whispered the boy, raising a finger for silence. "He has come up into the great cabin: in a moment, we shall have his signal to enter."

A few light touches on the strings of a guitar followed, and then a symphony was rapidly and beautifully executed, by one in the adjoining apartment.

"Alida herself is not more nimble-fingered," whispered the Alderman, "and I never heard the girl touch the Dutch lute, that cost a hundred Holland guilders, with a livelier movement!"

Ludlow signed for silence. A fine, manly voice, of great richness and depth, was soon heard, singing to an accompaniment on the same instrument. The air was grave, and altogether unusual for the social character of one who dwelt upon the ocean, being chiefly in recitative. The words, as near as might be distinguished, ran as follows—

"My brigantine!
Just in thy mould, and beauteous in thy form,
Gentle in roll, and buoyant on the surge,
Light as the sea-fowl, rocking in the storm,
In breeze and gale thy onward course we urge,
My water queen!

"Lady of mine!
More light and swift than thou, none thread the sea,
With surer keel, or steadier on its path;
We brave each waste of ocean-mystery,
And laugh to hear the howling tempest's wrath!
For we are thine!

" My brigantine !
Trust to the mystic power that points thy way,
Trust to the eye that pierces from afar,
Trust the red meteors that around thee play,
And fearless trust the sea-green lady's star,
Thou bark divine !"

"He often sings thus," whispered the boy, when the song was ended, "for they say, the sea-green lady loves music that tells of the ocean and of her power. Hark ! he has bid me enter."

"He did but touch the strings of the guitar again, boy."

"'Tis his signal, when the weather is fair. When we have the whistling of the wind, and the roar of the water, then he has a louder call."

Ludlow would have gladly listened longer, but the boy opened a door, and pointing the way to those he conducted, he silently vanished himself behind a curtain.

The visitors, more particularly the young commander of the Coquette, found new sub-

jects of admiration and wonder on entering the main cabin of the brigantine. The apartment, considering the size of the vessel, was spacious and high. It received light from a couple of windows in the stern, and it was evident that two smaller rooms, one on each of the quarters, shared with it in this advantage. The space between these state-rooms, as they are called in nautical language, necessarily formed a deep alcove, which might be separated from the outer portion of the cabin by a curtain of crimson damask, that now hung in festoons from a beam fashioned into a gilded cornice. A luxuriously looking pile of cushions, covered with red morocco, lay along the transom, in the manner of an eastern divan, and against the bulk-head of each state room, stood an agrippina of mahogany, that was lined with the same material. Neat and tasteful cases for books were suspended here and there, and the guitar which had so lately been used, lay on a small table of some precious wood, that occu-

pied the centre of the alcove. There were also other implements, like those which occupy the leisure of a cultivated but perhaps an effeminate, rather than a vigorous mind, scattered around, some evidently long neglected, and others appearing to have been more recently in favour.

The outer portion of the cabin was furnished in a similar style, though it contained many more of the articles that ordinarily belong to domestic economy. It had its agrippina, its piles of cushions, its chairs of beautiful wood, its cases for books, and its neglected instruments, intermixed with fixtures of a more solid and permanent appearance, which were arranged to meet the violent motion that was often unavoidable in so small a bark. There was a slight hanging of crimson damask around the whole apartment, and here and there a small mirror was let into the bulk-heads and ceilings. All the other parts were of a rich mahogany, relieved by pannels of rosewood, that gave an

appearance of exquisite finish to the cabin. The floor was covered with a mat of the finest texture, and of a fragrance that announced both its freshness, and the fact that the grass had been the growth of a warm and luxuriant climate. The place, as was indeed the whole vessel, so far as the keen eye of Ludlow could detect, was entirely destitute of arms, not even a pistol or a sword being suspended in those places where weapons of that description are usually seen, in all vessels employed either in war, or in a trade that might oblige those who sail them to deal in violence.

In the centre of the alcove stood the youthful-looking and extraordinary person who in so unceremonious a manner had visited la Cour des Fées the preceding night. His dress was much the same, in fashion and material, as when last seen; still it had been changed, for on the breast of the silken frock was painted an image of the sea-green lady, done with exquisite skill, and in a manner to preserve the whole of the

wild and unearthly character of the expression. The wearer of this singular ornament, leaned lightly against the little table; and as he bowed with entire self-possession to his guests, his face was lighted with a smile, that seemed to betray melancholy, no less than courtesy. At the same time he raised his cap, and stood in the rich jet-black locks, with which nature had so exuberantly shaded his forehead.

The manner of the visitors was less easy. The deep anxiety with which both Ludlow and the Patroon had undertaken to board the notorious smuggler, had given place to an amazement and a curiosity that caused them nearly to forget their errand, while Alderman Van Beverout appeared shy and suspicious, manifestly thinking less of his niece, than of the consequences of so remarkable an interview. They all returned the salutation of their host, though each waited for him to speak.

"They tell me I have the pleasure to receive a commander of Queen Anne's service, the

wealthy and honourable Patroon of Kinderhook, and a most worthy and respectable member of the city corporation, known as Alderman Van Beverout," commenced the individual who did the honours of the vessel on this occasion. "It is not often that my poor brigantine is thus favoured, and in the name of my mistress, I would express our thanks."

As he ceased speaking, he bowed again with ceremonious gravity, as if all were equally strangers to him, though the young men saw plainly that a smothered smile played about a mouth, that even they could not refuse the praise of being of rare and extraordinary attraction.

"As we have but one mistress," said Ludlow, "it is our common duty to wish to do her pleasure."

"I understand you, Sir. It is scarce necessary to say, however, that the wife of George of Denmark has little authority here. Forbear, I pray you," he added quickly, observing that

Ludlow was about to answer. "These interviews with the servants of that lady are not unfrequent; and as I know other matters have sent you hither, we will imagine all said, that a vigilant officer, and a most loyal subject could utter, to an outlaw and a trifler with the regulations of the customs. That controversy must be settled between us under our canvass, and by virtue of our speed, or other professional qualities, at proper time and in a proper place. We will now touch on different matters."

"I think the gentleman is right, Patroon. When matters are ripe for the exchequer, there is no use in worrying the lungs with summing up the testimony, like a fee'd advocate. Twelve discreet men, who have bowels of compassion for the vicissitudes of trade, and who know how hard it is to earn, and how easy it is to spend, will deal with the subject better than all the idle talkers in the provinces."

"When confronted to the twelve disinterested Daniels, I shall be fain to submit to their

judgment," rejoined the other, still suffering the wilful smile to linger round his lips. "You, Sir, I think are called Mr. Myndert Van Beverout. To what fall in peltry, or what rise in markets, do I owe the honour of this visit?"

"It is said that some from this vessel were so bold as to land on my grounds during the past night, without the knowledge and consent of their owner—you will observe the purport of our discourse, Mr. Van Staats, for it may yet come before the authorities;—as I said, Sir, without their owner's knowledge, and that there were dealings in articles that are contraband of law, unless they enter the provinces purified and embellished by the air of the Queen's European dominions—God bless her Majesty!"

"Amen.—That which quitteth the Water Witch commonly comes purified by the air of many different regions. We are no laggards in movement here, and the winds of Europe scarcely cease to blow upon our sails, before we scent the gales of America. But this is rather

exchequer matter, to be discussed before the twelve merciful burghers, than entertainment for such a visit."

"I open with the facts, that there may be no errors. But in addition to so foul an imputation on the credit of a merchant, there has a great calamity befallen me and my household, during the past night. The daughter and heiress of old Etienne de Barbérie has left her abode, and we have reason to think that she has been deluded so far as to come hither. Faith and correspondence! Master Seadrift; but I think this is exceeding the compass of even a trader in contraband! I can make allowances for some errors in an account; but women can be exported and imported without duty, and when and where one pleases, and therefore the less necessity for running them out of their old uncle's habitation in so secret a manner."

"An undeniable position, and a feeling conclusion! I admit the demand to be made in all

form, and I suppose these two gentlemen are to be considered as witnesses of its legality."

"We have come to aid a wronged and distressed relative and guardian in searching for his misguided ward," Ludlow answered.

The free-trader turned his eyes on the Patroon, who acknowledged his assent by a silent bow.

"'Tis well, gentlemen; I also admit the testimony. But though in common believed so worthy a subject for justice, I have hitherto had but little direct communication with the blind deity. Do the authorities usually give credit to these charges, without some evidence of their truth?"

"Is it denied?"

"You are still in possession of your senses, Captain Ludlow, and may freely use them. But this is an artifice to divert pursuit. There are other vessels beside the brigantine, and a capricious fair may have sought a protector even under a pennant of Queen Anne!"

"This is a truth that has been but too obvious to my mind, Mr. Van Beverout," observed the sententious Patroon. "It would have been well to have ascertained whether she we seek has not taken some less exceptionable course than this, before we hastily believe that your niece would so easily become the wife of a stranger."

"Has Mr. Van Staats any hidden meaning in his words, that he speaks ambiguously?" demanded Ludlow.

"A man, conscious of his good intentions, has little occasion to speak equivocally. I believe, with this reputed smuggler, that la Belle Barbérie would be more likely to fly with one she has long known, and whom I fear she has but too well esteemed, than with an utter stranger, over whose life there is cast a shade of so dark mystery."

"If the impression that the lady could yield her esteem with too little discretion, be any ex-

cuse for suspicions, then may I advise a search in the manor of Kinderhook !"

" Consent and joy ! The girl need not have stolen to church to become the bride of Oloff Van Staats !" interrupted the Alderman. " She should have had my benediction on the match, and a fat gift to give it unction."

" These suspicions are but natural between men bent on the same object," resumed the free-trader. " The officer of the Queen thinks a glance of the eye, from a wilful fair, means admiration of broad lands and rich meadows, and the lord of the manor distrusts the romance of warlike service, and the power of an imagination which roams the sea. Still may I ask what is there here to tempt a proud and courted beauty to forget station, sex, and friends ?"

" Caprice and vanity ! There is no answering for a woman's mind ! Here we bring articles at great risk and heavy charges from the farther Indies to please their fancies, and they change their modes easier than the beaver casts his coat.

Their conceits sadly unsettle trade, and I know not why they may not cause a wilful girl to do any other act of folly."

"This reasoning seems conclusive with the uncle. Do the suitors assent to its justice?"

The Patroon of Kinderhook had stood gazing, long and earnestly, at the countenance of the extraordinary being who asked this question. A movement which bespoke equally his conviction and his regret, escaped him, but he continued silent. Not so Ludlow. Of a more ardent temperament, though equally sensible of the temptation which had caused Alida to err, and as keenly alive to all the consequences to herself as well as to others, there was something of professional rivalry, and of an official right to investigate, which still mingled with his feelings. He had found time to examine more closely the articles that the cabin contained, and when their singular host put his question, he pointed with an ironical but mournful smile, to a footstool

richly wrought in flowers of tints and shades so just as to seem natural.

"This is no work of a sail-maker's needle!" said the captain of the Coquette. "Other beauties have been induced to pass an idle hour in your gay residence, hardy mariner, but sooner or later judgment will overtake the light-heeled craft."

"On the wind, or off, she must some day lag, as we seamen have it! Captain Ludlow, I excuse some harshness of construction that your language might imply, for it becomes a commissioned servant of the crown to use freedom with one who, like the lawless companion of the princely Hal, is but too apt to propose to 'rob me the king's exchequer.' But, Sir, this brigantine and her character are little known to you. We have no need of truant damsels to let us into the mystery of the sex's taste, for a female spirit guides all our humours, and imparts something of her delicacy to all our acts, even though it be the fashion among burghers to call

them lawless. See," throwing a curtain carelessly aside, and exhibiting behind it various articles of womanly employment, " here are the offspring of both pencil and needle. The sorceress," touching the image on his breast, " will not be entertained, without some deference to her sex."

" This affair must be arranged, I see, by a compromise," observed the Alderman. " By your leave, gentlemen, I will make proposals in private to this bold trader, who perhaps will listen to the offers I have to propose."

" Ah ! this savours more of the spirit of trade than of that of the sea-goddess I serve," cried the other, causing his fingers to run lightly over the strings of the guitar. " Compromise and offers are sounds that become a burgher's lips. My tricksy spirit, commit these gentlemen to the care of bold Thomas Tiller, while I confer with the merchant. The character of Mr. Van Beverout, Captain Ludlow, will pro-

tect us both from the suspicion of any designs on the revenue!"

Laughing at his own allusion, the free-trader signed to the boy, who had appeared from behind a curtain, to show the disappointed suitors of la Belle Barbérie into another part of the vessel.

"Foul tongues and calumnies! Master Seadrift, this unlawful manner of playing round business, after accounts are settled, and receipts passed, may lead to other loss besides that of character. The commander of the Coquette is not more than half satisfied of my ignorance of your misdoings in behalf of the customs already, and these jokes are like so many punches into a smouldering fire on a dark night: they only give light, and cause people to see the clearer. Though, Heaven knows, no man has less reason to dread an inquiry into his affairs than myself! I challenge the best accountant in the colonies to detect a false footing, or a doubtful

entry in any book I have, from the memorandum to the ledger."

"The Proverbs are not more sententious, nor the Psalms half as poetical as your library. But why this secret parley? The brigantine has a swept hold."

"Swept! Brooms and Van Tromp! thou hast swept the pavilion of my niece of its mistress, no less than my purse of its Johannes. This is carrying a little innocent barter into a most forbidden commerce, and I hope the joke is to end before the affair gets to be sweetening to the tea of the province gossips. Such a tale would affect the autumn importation of sugars!"

"This is more vivid than clear. You have my laces and velvets; my brocades and satins are already in the hands of the Manhattan dames, and your furs and Johannes are safe where no boarding officer from the Coquette—"

"Well, there is no need of speaking trum-

pets to tell a man what he knows already to his cost! I should expect no less than bankruptcy from two or three such bargains, and you wish to add loss of character to loss of gold. Bulkheads have ears in a ship, as well as walls in houses. I wish no more said of the trifling traffic that has been between us. If I lose a thousand florins by the operation, I shall know how to be resigned. Patience and afflictions! have I not buried as full-fed and promising a gelding this morning as ever paced a pavement, and has any man heard a complaint from my lips? I know how to meet losses, I hope, and so no more of an unlucky purchase."

"Truly, if it be not for trade, there is little in common between the mariners of the brigantine and Alderman Van Beverout."

"The greater the necessity thou shouldst end this silly joke, and restore his niece. I am not sure the affair can be at all settled with either of these hot-headed young men, though I should even offer to throw in a few thousands more, by

way of make-weight. When female reputation gets a bad name in the market, 'tis harder to dispose of than falling stock, and your young lords of manors, and commanders of cruisers, have stomachs like usurers; no per centage will satisfy them; it must be all or nothing! There was no such foolery in the days of thy worthy father! The honest trafficker brought his cutter into port with as innocent a look as a mill-boat. We had our discourses on the qualities of his wares, when here was his price, and there was my gold. Odd or even! it was all a chance which had the best of the bargain. I was a thriving man in those days, Master Seadrift; but thy spirit seems the spirit of extortion itself."

There was momentarily contempt on the lip of the handsome smuggler, but it disappeared in an expression of evident and painful sadness.

"Thou hast softened my heart, ere now, most liberal burgher," he answered, "by these allusions to my parent; and many is the doubloon that I have paid for his eulogies."

"I speak as disinterestedly as a parson preaches! What is a trifle of gold between friends. Yes, there was happiness in trade during the time of thy predecessor. He had a comely and a deceptive craft, that might be likened to an untrimmed racer. There was motion in it, at need, and yet it had the air of a leisurely Amsterdammer. I have known an exchequer cruiser hail him, and ask the news of the famous free-trader with as little suspicion as he would have in speaking the Lord High Admiral! There were no fooleries in his time; no unseemly hussies stuck under his bowsprit, to put an honest man out of countenance; no high-flyers in sail and paint; no singing and luting, but all was rational and gainful barter. Then he was a man to ballast his boat with something valuable. I have known him throw in fifty ankers of gin, without a farthing for freight, when a bargain has been struck for the finer articles—ay, and finish by landing them in

England for a small premium, when the gift was made!"

"He deserves thy praise, grateful Alderman; but to what conclusion does this opening tend?"

"Well, if more gold must pass between us," continued the reluctant Myndert, "we shall not waste time in counting it; though Heaven knows, Master Seadrift, thou hast already drained me dry. Losses have fallen heavy on me of late. There is a gelding dead, that fifty Holland ducats will not replace on the boomkey of Rotterdam, to say nothing of freight and charges, which come particularly heavy—"

"Speak to thy offer!" interrupted the other, who evidently wished to shorten the interview.

"Restore the girl, and take five and twenty thin pieces."

"Half-price for a Flemish gelding! La Belle would blush with honest pride, did she know her value in the market!"

"Extortion and bowels of compassion! Let it be a hundred, and no further words between us."

"Harkee, Mr. Van Beverout; that I sometimes trespass on the Queen's earnings, is not to be denied, and least of all to you; for I like neither this manner of ruling a nation by deputy, nor the principle which says that one bit of earth is to make laws for another. 'Tis not my humour, Sir, to wear an English cotton when my taste is for the florentine, nor to swallow beer, when I more relish the delicate wines of Gascony. Beyond this, thou knowest I do not trifle, even with fancied rights, and had I fifty of thy nieces, sacks of ducats should not purchase one!"

The Alderman stared, in a manner that might have induced a spectator to believe he was listening to an incomprehensible proposition. Still his companion spoke with a warmth, that gave him no small reason to believe he uttered no more than he felt, and inexplicable

as it might prove, that he valued treasure less than feeling.

"Obstinacy and extravagance!" muttered Myndert, "what use can a troublesome girl be to one of thy habits? If thou hast deluded—"

"I have deluded none. The brigantine is not an Algerine to ask and take ransom."

"Then let it submit to what I believe it is yet a stranger. If thou hast not enticed my niece away, by Heaven knows a most vain delusion! let the vessel be searched. This will make the minds of the young men tranquil, and keep the treaty open between us, and the value of the article fixed in the market."

"Freely,—but mark! If certain bales containing worthless furs of martens and beavers, with other articles of thy colony trade, should discover the character of my correspondents, I stand exonerated of all breach of faith?"

"There is prudence in that. Yes, there must be no impertinent eyes peeping into bales and packages. Well, I see, Master Seadrift, the

impossibility of immediately coming to an understanding, and therefore I will quit thy vessel, for truly a merchant of reputation should have no unnecessary connection with one so suspected."

The free-trader smiled, partly in scorn and yet much in sadness, and passed his fingers over the strings of the guitar.

"Shew this worthy burgher to his friends, Zephyr," he said, and bowing to the Alderman, he dismissed him in a manner that betrayed a singular compound of feeling. One quick to discover the traces of human passion, might have fancied that regret and even sorrow were powerfully blended with the natural or assumed recklessness of the smuggler's air and language.

CHAPTER III.

"This will prove a brave kingdom to me;
Where I shall have my music for nothing!"

Tempest.

During the time passed in the secret conference of the cabin, Ludlow and the Patroon were held in discourse on the quarter-deck by the hero of the India shawl. The dialogue was professional, as Van Staats maintained his ancient reputation for taciturnity. The appearance of Myndert, thoughtful, disappointed, and most evidently perplexed, caused the ideas of all to take a new direction. It is probable

that the burgher believed he had not yet bid enough to tempt the free-trader to restore his niece, for, by his air, it was apparent his mind was far from being satisfied that she was not in the vessel. Still, when questioned by his companions concerning the result of his interview with the free-trader, for reasons best understood by himself, he was fain to answer evasively.

"Of one thing rest satisfied," he said; "the misconception in this affair will yet be explained, and Alida Barbérie return unfettered, and with a character as free from blemish, as the credit of the Van Stoppers of Holland. The fanciful looking person in the cabin denies that my niece is here, and I am inclined to think the balance of truth is on his side. I confess, if one could just look into the cabins, without the trouble of rummaging lockers and cargo, the statement would give more satisfaction, but—hem—gentlemen, we must take the assertion on credit, for want of more sufficient security."

Ludlow looked at the cloud above the mouth of the Rariton, and his lip curled in a haughty smile.

"Let the wind hold here, at east," he said, "and we shall act our pleasure with both lockers and cabins."

"Hist, the worthy Master Tiller may overhear this threat—and after all, I do not know whether prudence does not tell us to let the brigantine depart."

"Mr. Alderman Van Beverout," rejoined the Captain, whose cheek had reddened to a glow, "my duty must not be guaged by your affection for your neice. Though content that Alida Barbérie should quit the country, like an article of vulgar commerce, the commander of this vessel must get a passport of her Majesty's cruiser, ere she again enter the high sea."

"Wilt say as much to the sea-green lady?" asked the mariner of the shawl, suddenly appearing at his elbow.

The question was so unexpected and so

strange, that it caused an involuntary start; but recovering his recollection on the instant, the young sailor haughtily replied—

"Or to any other monster thou canst conjure!"

"We will take you at the word. There is no more certain method of knowing the past, or the future, the quarter of the heavens from which the winds are to come, or the season of the hurricanes, than by putting a question to our mistress. She who knows so much of hidden matters, may tell us what you wish to know. We will have her called by the usual summons."

Thus saying, the mariner of the shawl gravely quitted his guests, and descended into the inferior cabins of the vessel. It was but a moment, before there arose sounds from some secret, though not distant quarter of the brigantine, that caused, in some measure, both surprise and pleasure to Ludlow and the Patroon.

Their companion had his motives for being insensible to either of these emotions.

After a short and rapid symphony, a wind instrument took up a wild strain, while a human voice was again heard chaunting to the music, words which were so much involved by the composition of the air, as to render it impossible to trace more, than that their burthen was a sort of mysterious incantation of some ocean deity.

"Squeaking and flutes!" grumbled Myndert, ere the last sounds were fairly ended; "this is downright heathenish, and a plain dealing man who does business above board, has good reason to wish himself honestly at church. What have we to do with land-witches, or water-witches, or any other witchcraft, that we stay in the brigantine, now it is known that my niece is not to be found aboard her? and, moreover, even admitting that we were disposed to traffic, the craft has nothing in her that a

man of Manhattan should want. The deepest bog of thy manor, Patroon, is safer ground to tread on, than the deck of a vessel that has got a reputation like that of this craft."

The scenes of which he was a witness had produced a powerful effect on Van Staats of Kinderhook. Of a slow imagination, but of a powerful and vast frame, he was not easily excited, either to indulge in fanciful images or to suffer personal apprehension. Only a few years had passed since men, who in other respects were enlightened, firmly believed in the existence of supernatural agencies in the control of the affairs of this life, and though the New Netherlanders had escaped the infatuation which prevailed so generally in the religious provinces of New England, a credulous superstition of a less active quality possessed the minds of the most intelligent of the Dutch colonists, and even of their descendants, so lately as in our own times. The art of divination was particularly in favour, and it rarely hap-

pened, that any inexplicable event affected the fortunes or comforts of the good provincialists, without their having recourse to some one of the more renowned fortune-tellers of the country for an explanation. Men of slow faculties love strong excitement, because they are insensible to less powerful impulses, as men of hard heads find most enjoyment in strong liquors. The Patroon was altogether of the sluggish cast, and to him there was consequently a secret, but deep pleasure, in his present situation.

"What important results may flow from this adventure, we know not, Mr. Alderman Van Beverout," returned Oloff Van Staats; "and I confess a desire to see and hear more before we land. This Skimmer of the Seas is altogether a different man from what our rumours in the city have reported, and by remaining, we may set public opinion nearer to the truth. I have heard my late venerable aunt—"

"Chimney corners and traditions! The good lady was no bad customer of these gentry, Patroon, and it is lucky that they got no more of thy inheritance in the way of fees. You see the Lust in Rust against the mountain there? well, all that is meant for the public is on the outside, and all that is intended for my own private gratification, is kept within doors. But here is Captain Ludlow, who has matters of the Queen on his hands, and the gentleman will find it disloyal to waste the moments in this juggling."

"I confess the same desire to witness the end," drily returned the commander of the Coquette. "The state of the wind prevents any immediate change in the positions of the two vessels, and why not get a further insight into the extraordinary character of those who belong to the brigantine?"

"Ay, there it is!" muttered the Alderman, between his teeth. "Your insights and outsights lead to all the troubles of life. One is

never snug with these fantastics, which trifle with a secret, like a fly fluttering round a candle until its wings get burnt."

As his companions seemed resolved to stay, however, there remained no alternative for the burgher, but patience. Although apprehension of some indiscreet exposure was certainly the feeling uppermost in his mind, he was not entirely without some of the weakness which caused Oloff Van Staats to listen and to gaze, with so much obvious interest and secret awe.

Even Ludlow himself felt more affected than he would have willingly owned, by the extraordinary situation in which he was placed. No man is entirely insensible to the influence of sympathy, let it exert its power in what manner it will. Of this the young sailor was the more conscious, through the effect that was produced on himself by the grave exteriors and attentive manner of all the mariners of the brigantine. He was a seaman of no mean accomplishments, and among other attainments

that properly distinguish men of his profession, he had learned to know the country of a sailor, by those general and distinctive marks which form the principal difference between men whose common pursuit has, in so great a degree, created a common character. Intelligence, at that day, was confined to narrow limits among those who dwelt on the ocean. Even the officer was but too apt to be one of rude and boisterous manners, of limited acquirements, and of deep and obstinate prejudices. No wonder, then, that the common man was, in general, ignorant of most of those opinions which gradually enlighten society. Ludlow had seen, on entering the vessel, that her crew was composed of men of different countries. Age and personal character seemed to have been more consulted, in their selection, than national distinctions. There was a Findlander, with a credulous and oval physiognomy, sturdy but short frame, and a light vacant eye; and a dark-skinned seaman of the Mediterranean, whose classical

outline of feature was often disturbed by uneasy and sensitive glances at the horizon. These two men had come and placed themselves near the group on the quarter-deck, when the last music was heard, and Ludlow had ascribed the circumstance to a sensibility to melody, when the child Zephyr stole to their side, in a manner to show that more was meant by the movement than was apparent in the action itself. The appearance of Tiller, who invited the party to re-enter the cabin, explained its meaning, by showing that these men, like themselves, had business with the being, who, it was pretended, had so great an agency in controlling the fortunes of the brigantine.

The party who now passed into the little anti-room, was governed by very different sensations. The curiosity of Ludlow was lively, fearless, and a little mingled with an interest that might be termed professional; while that of his two companions, was not without some inward reverence for the mysterious power of

the sorceress. The two seamen manifested dull dependence, while the boy exhibited, in his ingenuous and half-terrified countenance, most unequivocally the influence of childish awe. The mariner of the shawl was grave, silent, and, what was unusual in his deportment, respectful. After a moment's delay the door of the inner apartment was opened by Seadrift himself, and he signed for the whole to enter.

A material change had been made in the arrangement of the principal cabin. The light was entirely excluded from the stern, and the crimson curtain had been lowered before the alcove. A small window, whose effect was to throw a dim obscurity within, had been opened in the side. The objects on which its light fell strongest received a soft colouring from the hues of the hangings.

The free-trader received his guests with a chastened air, bowing silently and with less of levity in his mien, than in the former interview. Still Ludlow thought there lingered a forced,

but sad smile about his handsome mouth, and the Patroon gazed at his fine features, with the admiration that one might feel for the most favoured of those who were believed to administer at some supernatural shrine. The feelings of the Alderman were exhibited only by some half suppressed murmurs of discontent, that from time to time escaped him, notwithstanding a certain degree of reverence, that was gradually prevailing over his ill-concealed dissatisfaction.

"They tell me you would speak with our mistress," said the principal personage of the vessel, in a subdued voice. "There are others, too, it would seem, who wish to seek counsel from her wisdom. It is now many months since we have had direct converse with her, though the book is ever open to all applicants for knowledge. You have nerves for the meeting?"

"Her Majesty's enemies have never reproached me with their want," returned Lud-

low, smiling incredulously. "Proceed with your incantations, that we may know."

"We are not necromancers, Sir, but faithful mariners, who do their mistress' pleasure. I know that you are sceptical, but bolder men have confessed their mistakes with less testimony. Hist! we are not alone. I hear the opening and shutting of the brigantine's transoms."

The speaker then fell back, nearly to the line in which the others had arranged themselves, and waited the result in silence. The curtain rose to a low air on the same wind instrument, and even Ludlow felt an emotion more powerful than interest, as he gazed on the object that was revealed to view.

A female form, attired as near as might be like the figure-head of the vessel, and standing in a similar attitude, occupied the centre of the alcove. As in the image, one hand held a book with its page turned towards the spectators, while a finger of the other pointed ahead,

as if giving to the brigantine its course. The sea-green drapery was floating behind, as if it felt the influence of the air, and the face had the same dark and unearthly hue, with its malign and remarkable smile.

When the start and the first gaze of astonishment were over, the Alderman and his companions glanced their eyes at each other, in wonder. The smile on the look of the free-trader became less hidden, and it partook of triumph.

"If any here has aught to say to the lady of our bark, let him now declare it. She has come far at our call, and will not tarry long."

"I would then know," said Ludlow, drawing a heavy breath, like one recovering from some sudden and powerful sensation, "if she I seek be within the brigantine?"

He who acted the part of mediator in this extraordinary ceremony, bowed and advanced to the book, which, with an air of deep reve-

rence, he consulted, reading, or appearing to read, from its pages.

" You are asked here, in return for that you inquire, if she you seek is sought in sincerity ?'

Ludlow reddened; the manliness of the profession to which he belonged, however, overcame the reluctance natural to self-esteem, and he answered firmly—

" She is."

" But you are a mariner; men of the sea place their affections often on the fabric in which they dwell. Is the attachment for her you seek, stronger than love of wandering, of your ship, your youthful expectations, and the glory that forms a young soldier's dreams ?"

The commander of the Coquette hesitated. After a moment of pause, like that of self-examination, he said—

" As much so as may become a man."

A cloud crossed the brow of his interrogator, who advanced and again consulted the pages of the book.

"You are required to say, if a recent event has not disturbed your confidence in her you seek?"

"Disturbed—but not destroyed."

The sea-green lady moved, and the pages of the mysterious volume trembled, as if eager to deliver their oracles.

"And could you repress curiosity, pride, and all the other sentiments of your sex, and seek her favour, without asking explanation, as before the occurrence of late events?"

"I would do much to gain a kind look from Alida de Barbérie, but the degraded spirit of which you speak, would render me unworthy of her esteem. If I found her as I lost her, my life should be devoted to her happiness, and if not, to mourning that one so fair should have fallen!"

"Have you ever felt jealousy?"

"First let me know if I have cause?" cried the young man, advancing a step towards the motionless form, with an evident intent to look closer into its character.

The hand of the mariner of the shawl arrested him with the strength of a giant.

"None trespass on the respect due to our mistress," coolly observed the vigorous seaman, while he motioned to the other to retreat.

A fierce glance shot from his eye, and then the recollection of his present helplessness came in season to restrain the resentment of the offended officer.

"Have you ever felt jealousy?" continued his undisturbed interrogator.

"Would any love, that have not?"

A gentle respiration was heard in the cabin, during the short pause that succeeded, though none could tell whence it came. The Alderman turned to regard the Patroon, as if he believed the sigh was his, while the startled Ludlow looked curiously around him, at a loss to know who acknowledged, with so much sensibility, the truth of his reply.

"Your answers are well," resumed the free-trader, after a pause longer than usual. Then

turning to Oloff Van Staats, he said, "Whom, or what do you seek?"

"We come on a common errand."

"And do you seek in all sincerity?"

"I could wish to find."

"You are rich in lands and houses; is she you seek dear to you as this wealth?"

"I esteem them both, since one could not wish to tie a woman he admired to beggary."

The Alderman hemmed so loud as to fill the cabin, and then, startled at his own interruption, he involuntarily bowed an apology to the motionlesss form in the alcove, and regained his composure.

"There is more of prudence than of ardour in your answer. Have you ever felt jealousy?"

"That has he!" eagerly exclaimed Myndert. "I've known the gentleman raving as a bear that has lost its cub, when my niece has smiled, in church for instance, though it were only in answer to a nod from an old lady. Philosophy and composure, Patroon! who the

devil knows but Alida may hear of this questioning, and then her French blood will boil, to find that your heart has always gone as regularly as a town-clock."

"Could you receive her without inquiring into past events?"

"That would he—that would he!" returned the Alderman. "I answer for it, that Mr. Van Staats complies with all engagements, as punctually as the best house in Amsterdam, itself."

The book again trembled, but it was with a waving and dissatisfied motion.

"What is thy will with our mistress?" demanded the free-trader, of the fair-haired sailor.

"I have bargained, with some of the dealers of my country, for a wind to carry the brigantine through the inlet."

"Go;—the Water Witch will sail when there is need.—And you?"

"I wish to know whether a few skins I

bought last night for a private venture, will turn to good account?"

"Trust the sea-green lady for your profits. When did she ever let any fail in a bargain? Child, what has brought thee hither?"

The boy trembled, and a little time elapsed before he found resolution to answer.

"They tell me it is so queer to be upon the land!"

"Sirrah, thou hast been answered. When others go, thou shalt go with them."

"They say it's pleasant to taste the fruits from off the very trees—"

"Thou art answered.—Gentlemen, our mistress departs. She knows that one among you has threatened her favourite brigantine with the anger of an earthly Queen, but it is beneath her office to reply to threats so idle. Hark! her attendants are in waiting!"

The wind instrument was once more heard, and the curtain slowly fell to its strains. A sudden and violent noise, resembling the open-

ing and shutting of some massive door, succeeded, and then all was still. When the sorceress had disappeared, the free-trader resumed his former ease of manner, seeming to speak and act more naturally. Alderman Van Beverout drew a long breath, like one relieved, and even the mariner of the gay shawl stood in an easier and more reckless attitude than while in her presence. The two seamen and the child withdrew.

"Few who wear that livery have ever before seen the lady of our brigantine," continued the free-trader, addressing himself to Ludlow; "and it is proof that she has less aversion to your cruiser, than she in common feels to most of the long pennants that are abroad on the water."

"Thy mistress, thy vessel, and thyself are alike amusing!" returned the young seaman, again smiling incredulously, and with some little official pride. "It will be well if you

maintain this pleasantry much longer at the expense of her Majesty's customs."

"We trust to the power of the Water Witch. She has adopted our brigantine as her abode, given it her name, and guides it with her hand. 'Twould be weak to doubt, when thus protected."

"There may be occasion to try her virtues. Were she a spirit of the deep waters her robe would be blue. Nothing of a light draught can escape the Coquette?"

"Dost not know that the colour of the sea differs in different climes? We fear not, but you would have answers to your questions. Honest Tiller will carry you all to the land, and in passing, the book may again be consulted. I doubt not she will leave us some further memorial of her visit."

The free-trader then bowed and retired behind the curtain with the air of a sovereign dismissing his visitors from an audience, though

his eye glanced curiously behind him, as he disappeared, as if to trace the effect which had been produced by the interview. Alderman Van Beverout and his friends were in the boat again before a syllable was exchanged between them. They had followed the mariner of the shawl, in obedience to his signal, and they quitted the side of the beautiful brigantine, like men who pondered on what they had just witnessed.

Enough has been betrayed in the course of the narrative, perhaps, to show that Ludlow distrusted, though he could not avoid wondering, at what he had seen. He was not entirely free from the superstition that was then so common among seamen; but his education and native good sense enabled him in a great measure to extricate his imagination from that love of the marvellous, which is more or less peculiar to all. He had fifty conjectures concerning the meaning of what had passed, and not one of them was true; though each at the instant

seemed to appease his curiosity, while it quickened his resolution to pry further into the affair. As for the Patroon of Kinderhook, the present day was one of rare and unequalled pleasure. He had all the gratification which strong excitement can produce on slow natures, and he neither wished a solution of his doubts nor contemplated any investigation that might destroy so agreeable an illusion. His fancy was full of the dark countenance of the sorceress, and when it did not dwell on a subject so unnatural, it saw the handsome features, ambiguous smile, and attractive air of her scarcely less admirable minister.

As the boat got to a little distance from the vessel, Tiller stood erect, and ran his eye complacently over the perfection of her hull and rigging.

"Our mistress has equipped and sent upon the wide and unbeaten sea many a bark," he said, "but never a lovelier than our own!—Captain Ludlow, there has been some double

dealing between us; but that which is to follow, shall depend on our skill, seamanship, and the merits of the two crafts. You serve Queen Anne, and I the sea-green lady. Let each be true to his mistress, and Heaven preserve the deserving!—Wilt see the book before we make the trial?"

Ludlow intimated his assent, and the boat approached the figure-head. It was impossible to prevent the feeling which each of our three adventurers, not excepting the Alderman, felt, when they came in full view of the motionless image. The mysterious countenance appeared endowed with thought, and the malign smile seemed still more ironical than before.

"The first question was yours, and yours must be the first answer," said Tiller, motioning for Ludlow to consult the page which was open. "Our mistress deals chiefly in verses from the old writer, whose thoughts are almost as common to us all, as to human nature."

"What means this?" said Ludlow hastily—

'She, Claudio, that you wrong'd, look you restore.
——— love her, Angelo;
I have confessed her, and I know her virtue.'

"These are plain words; but I would rather that another priest should shrive her whom I love!"

"Hist—young blood is swift and quickly heated. Our lady of the bark will not relish hot speech over her oracles.—Come, Master Patroon, turn the page with the rattan, and see what fortune will give."

Oloff Van Staats raised his powerful arm with the hesitation, and yet with the curiosity of a girl. It was easy to read in his eye the pleasure his heavy nature felt in the excitement, and yet it was easy to detect the misgivings of an erroneous education, by the seriousness of all the other members of his countenance. He read aloud—

"I have a motion much imports your good;
Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline,

What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine :—
So bring us to our palace, where we'll shew
What's yet behind, that's meet you all should know."
Measure for Measure.

"Fair dealing and fairer speech! 'What's yours is mine, and what is mine is yours,' is Measure for Measure truly, Patroon!" cried the Alderman. "A more equitable bargain cannot be made, when the assets are of equal value. Here is encouragement in good sooth, and now, Master Mariner, we will land and proceed to the Lust in Rust, which must be the palace meant in the verses. What's yet behind must be Alida, the tormenting baggage who has been playing at hide and seek with us, for no other reason than to satisfy her womanish vanity, by showing how uncomfortable she could make three grave and responsible men. Let the boat go, Master Tiller, since that is thy name, and many thanks for thy civilities."

"'Twould give grave offence to leave the lady without knowing all she has to say. The

answer now concerns you, worthy Alderman, and the rattan will do its turn in your hand as well as in that of another."

"I despise a pitiful curiosity, and content myself with knowing what chance and good luck teaches," returned Myndert. "There are men in Manhattan ever prying into their neighbours' credit, like frogs lying with their noses out of water; but it is enough for me to know the state of my books, with some insight into that of the market."

"It will not do. This may appease a quiet conscience like your own, Sir, but we of the brigantine may not trifle with our mistress. One touch of the rattan will tell you whether these visits to the Water Witch are likely to prove to your advantage."

Myndert wavered. It has been said that, like most others of his origin in the colony, he had a secret leaning to the art of divination, and the words of the hero of the shawl contained a flattering allusion to the profits of his secret

commerce. He took the offered stick, and by the time the page was turned his eyes were ready enough to consult its contents. There was but a line, which was also quoted as coming from the well-known comedy of "Measure for Measure."

"Proclaim it, provost, round about the city."

In his eagerness Myndert read the oracle aloud, and then he sunk into his seat, affecting to laugh at the whole as a childish and vain conceit.

"Proclamation me no proclamations! Is it a time of hostilities or of public danger, that one should go shouting with his tidings through the street? Measure for Measure, truly! Harkee, Master Tiller, this sea-green trull of thine is no better than she should be, and unless she mends her manner of dealing, no honest man will be found willing to be seen in her company. I am no believer in necromancy—though the inlet has certainly opened this year altogether in an un-

usual manner—and therefore I put little faith in her words; but as for saying aught of me or mine, in town or country, Holland or America, that can shake my credit, why I defy her! Still I would not willingly have any idle stories to contradict, and I shall conclude by saying, you will do well to stop her mouth."

"Stop a hurricane or a tornado! Truth will come in her book, and he that reads must expect to see it. Captain Ludlow, you are master of your movements again, for the inlet is no longer between you and your cruiser. Behind yon hillock is the boat and crew you missed. The latter expect you. And now, gentlemen, we leave the rest to the green lady's guidance, our own good skill, and the winds! I salute you."

The moment his companions were on the shore the hero of the shawl caused his boat to quit it, and in less than five minutes it was seen swinging by its tackles at the stern of the brigantine.

CHAPTER IV.

"Like Arion on the dolphin's back,
I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves,
So long as I could see."

Tempest.

THERE was one curious though half-confounded observer of all that passed in and around the cove on the morning in question. This personage was no other than the slave called Bonnie, who was the factotum of his master over the demesnes of the Lust in Rust, during the time when the presence of the Alderman was required in the city, which was, in truth, at least four-fifths of the year. Respon-

sibility and confidence had produced their effect on this negro, as on more cultivated minds. He had been used to act in situations of care, and practice had produced a habit of vigilance and observation that was not common in men of his unfortunate condition. There is no moral truth more certain, than that men, when once accustomed to this species of domination, as readily submit their minds as their bodies to the control of others. Thus it is that we see entire nations maintaining so many erroneous maxims, merely because it has suited the interests of those who do the thinking to give forth these fallacies to their followers. Fortunately, however, for the improvement of the race and the advancement of truth, it is only necessary to give a man an opportunity to exercise his natural faculties, in order to make him a reflecting, and in some degree, an independent being. Such, though to a very limited extent, certainly, had been the consequence, in the instance of the slave just mentioned.

How far Bonnie had been concerned in the proceedings between his master and the mariners of the brigantine, it is unnecessary to say. Little passed at the villa of which he was ignorant, and as curiosity, once awakened, increases its own desire for indulgence, could he have had his wish, little would have passed any where near him without his knowing something of its nature and import. He had seen, while seemingly employed with his hoe in the garden of the Alderman, the trio conveyed by Erasmus across the inlet; had watched the manner in which they followed its margin to the shade of the oak, and had seen them enter the brigantine as related. That this extraordinary visit on board a vessel which was in common shrouded by so much mystery, had given rise to much and unusual reflection in the mind of the black, was apparent by the manner in which he so often paused in his labour, and stood leaning on the handle of his hoe like one who mused. He had never known his master so far overstep his

usual caution as to quit the dwelling during the occasional visits of the free-trader, and yet he had now gone as it were into the very jaws of the lion, accompanied by the commander of a royal cruiser himself. No wonder, then, that the vigilance of the negro became still more active, and that not even the slightest circumstance was suffered to escape his admiring eye. During the whole time consumed by the visit related in the preceding chapter, not a minute had been suffered to pass without an inquiring look in the direction, either of the brigantine or of the adjacent shore.

It is scarcely necessary to say how keen the attention of the slave became when his master and his companions were seen to return to the land. They immediately ascended to the foot of the oak, and then there was a long and apparently a serious conference between them. During this consultation the negro dropped the end of his hoe, and never suffered his gaze for an instant to alter its direction. Indeed he

scarcely drew breath, until the whole party quitted the spot together, and buried themselves in the thicket that covered the cape, taking the direction of its outer or northern extremity, instead of retiring by the shore of the cove towards the inlet. Then Bonnie respired heavily, and began to look about him at the other objects, that properly belonged to the interest of the scene.

The brigantine had run up her boat, and she now lay, as when first seen, a motionless, beautiful, and exquisitely graceful fabric, without the smallest sign about her of an intention to move, or indeed without exhibiting any other proof, except in her admirable order and symmetry, that any of human powers dwelt within her hull. The royal cruiser, though larger and of far less aerial mould and fashion, presented the same picture of repose. The distance between the two was about a league, and Bonnie was sufficiently familiar with the formation of the land and of the position of the vessels, to be

quite aware that this inactivity on the part of those, whose duty it was to protect the rights of the Queen, proceeded from their utter ignorance of the proximity of their neighbour. The thicket which bounded the cove, and the growth of oaks and pines that stretched along the narrow sandy spit of land quite to its extremity, sufficiently accounted for the fact. The negro, therefore, after gazing for several minutes at the two immovable vessels, turned his eye askance on the earth, shook his head, and then burst into a laugh, which was so noisy that it caused his sable partner to thrust her vacant and circular countenance through an open window of the scullery of the villa, to demand the reason of a merriment, that to her faithful feelings appeared to be a little unsocial.

"Hey! you alway' keep 'e queer t'ing to heself, Bonnie, but," cried the vixen, "I'm werry glad to see old bones like a hoe; an' I wonner dere ar' time to laugh wid 'e garden full of weed!"

"Grach!" exclaimed the negro, stretching out an arm in a forensic attitude; "what a black woman know of politick! If a hab time to talk, better cook a dinner. Tell one t'ing, Phillis, and dat be dis; vy 'e ship of Captain Ludlow no lif' 'e anchor and come take dis rogue in 'e cove? can a tell dat much, or no? If no, let a man who understan' heself laugh much as he like. A little fun no harm Queen Anne, nor kill 'e Gubbenor!"

"All work and no sleep make old bone ache, Bonnie, but!" returned the consort. "Ten o' clock—twelve o'clock—t'ree o'clock, and no bed; vell I see 'e sun afore a black fool put 'e head on a pillow! An' now a hoe go all 'e same as if he sleep a ten hour. Masser Myn'ert got a heart, and he no wish to kill he people wid work, or old Phillis war' dead fifty year next winter."

"I t'ink a wench's tongue nebber satisfy! What for tell a whole world when Bonnie go to bed! He sleep for heself, and he no sleep

for 'e neighbourhood! Dere! A man can't t'ink of every t'ing in a minute. Here a ribbon long enough to hang heself—take him, and den remem'er, Phyllis, dat you be 'e wife of a man who hab care on he shoul'er."

Bonnie then set up another laugh, in which his partner, having quitted her scullery to seize the gift, which in its colours resembled the skin of a garter snake, did not fail to join, through mere excess of animal delight. The effect of the gift, however, was to leave the negro to make his observations without any further interruption from one who was a little too apt to disturb his solitude.

A boat was now seen to pull out from among the bushes that lined the shore, and Bonnie was enabled to distinguish, in its stern-sheets, the persons of his master, Ludlow and the Patroon. He had been acquainted with the seizure of the Coquette's barge, the preceding night, and of the confinement of the crew. Its appearance in that place, therefore, occasioned no new sur-

prise. But the time which past, while the men were rowing up to the sloop of war, was filled with minutes of increasing interest. The black abandoned his hoe and took a position on the side of the mountain that gave him a view of the whole bay. So long as the mysteries of the Lust in Rust had been confined to the ordinary combinations of a secret trade, he had been fully able to comprehend them, but now that there apparently existed an alliance so unnatural as one between his master and the cruiser of the crown, he felt the necessity of double observation, and of greater thought.

A far more enlightened mind than that of the slave, might have been excited by the expectation and the objects which now presented themselves, especially if sufficiently prepared for events by a knowledge of the two vessels in sight. Though the wind still hung at east, the cloud above the mouth of the Rariton had at length began to rise. The broad fleeces of white vapour, that had lain the whole morning

over the continent, were rapidly uniting, and they formed already a dark and dense mass, that floated in the bottom of the estuary, threatening shortly to roll over the whole of its wide waters. The air was getting lighter and variable, and while the wash of the surf sounded still more audible, its roll upon the beach was less regular than in the earlier hours of the day. Such was the state of the two elements, when the boat touched the side of the ship. In a minute it was hanging by its tackles, high in the air, and then it disappeared in the bosom of the dark mass.

It far exceeded the intelligence of Bonnie to detect now any further signs of preparation in either of the two vessels which absorbed the whole of his attention. They appeared to him to be alike without motion, and equally without people. There were, it is true, a few specks in the rigging of the Coquette, which might be men, but the distance prevented him from being sure of the fact, and admitting them to be sea-

men busied aloft, there were no visible consequences of their presence that his uninstructed eye could trace. In a minute or two, even these scattered specks were seen no longer, though the attentive black thought that the mast-heads and the rigging beneath the tops thickened, as if surrounded by more than their usual mazes of ropes. At that moment of suspense, the cloud over the Rariton emitted a flash, and the sound of distant thunder rolled along the water. This seemed to be a signal for the cruiser, for when the eye of Bonnie, which had been directed to the heavens, returned towards the ship, he saw that she had opened and hoisted her three topsails, seemingly with as little exertion as an eagle would have spread his wings. The ship now became uneasy, for the wind came in puffs, and the vessel rolled lightly, as if struggling to extricate itself from the hold of its anchor ; and then, precisely at the moment when the shift of wind was felt, and the breeze came from the cloud in the west, the cruiser

whirled away from its constrained position, and appearing for a short space restless as a steed that had broken from its fastenings, it came up heavily to the wind, and lay balanced by the action of its sails. There was another minute or two of seeming inactivity, after which the broad surfaces of the topsails were brought in parallel lines. One white sheet was spread after another upon the fabric, and Bonnie saw that the Coquette, the swiftest cruiser of the crown in those seas, was dashing out from the land, under a cloud of canvass.

All this time the brigantine in the cove lay quietly at her anchor. When the wind shifted, the light hull swang with its currents, and the image of the sea-green lady was seen offering her dark cheek to be fanned by the breeze. But she alone seemed to watch over the fortunes of her followers, for no other eye could be seen looking out on the danger that began so seriously to threaten them, both from the

heavens, and from a more certain and intelligible foe.

As the wind was fresh, though unsteady, the Coquette moved through the water with a velocity that did no discredit to her reputation for speed. At first it seemed to be the intention of the royal cruiser to round the cape, and to gain an offing in the open sea, for her head was directed northwardly; but no sooner had she cleared the curve of the little bight, which from its shape is known by the name of the horse-shoe, than she was seen shooting directly into the eye of the wind and falling off with the graceful and easy motion of a ship in stays, her head looking towards the Lust in Rust. Her design on the notorious dealer in contraband was now too evident to admit of doubt.

Still the Water Witch betrayed no symptoms of alarm. The meaning eye of the image seemed to study the motions of her adversary with all the understanding of an intelligent being, and occasionally the brigantine turned

slightly in the varying currents of the air, as if volition directed the movements of the little fabric. These changes resembled the quick and slight movements of the hound, as if he lifts his head in his lair, to listen to some distant sound, or to scent some passing taint in the gale.

In the mean time the approach of the ship was so swift, as to cause the negro to shake his head, with a meaning that exceeded even his usually important look. Every thing was propitious to her progress, and as the water of the cove, during the periods that the inlet remained open, was known to be of a sufficient depth to admit of her entrance, the faithful Bonnie began to anticipate a severe blow to the future fortunes of his master. The only hope that he could perceive for the escape of the smuggler, was in the changes of the heavens.

Although the threatening cloud had now quitted the mouth of the Rariton, and was

rolling eastward with fearful velocity, it had not yet broken. The air had the unnatural and heated appearance which precedes a gust, but, with the exception of a few large drops, that fell, seemingly from a clear sky, it was as yet what is called a dry squall. The water of the bay was occasionally dark, angry, and green, and there were moments when it would appear as if heavy currents of air descended to its surface, wantonly to try their power on the sister element. Notwithstanding these sinister omens, the Coquette stood on her course, without lessening the wide surfaces of her canvass by a single inch. They who governed her movements were no men of the lazy Levant, nor of the mild waters of the Mediterranean, to tear their hair and call on saints to stand between their helplessness and harm, but mariners trained in a boisterous sea, and accustomed to place their first dependence on their own good manhood, aided by the vigilance and skill of a long and severely exercised expe-

rience. A hundred eyes on board that cruiser watched the advance of the rolling cloud, or looked upon the play of light and shade that caused the colour of the water to vary, but it was steadily and with an entire dependence on the discretion of the young officer who controlled the movements of the ship.

Ludlow himself paced the deck, with all his usual composure, so far as might be seen by external signs, though in reality his mind was agitated by feelings that were foreign to the duties of his station. He too had thrown occasional glances at the approaching squall, but his eye was far oftener riveted on the motionless brigantine, which was now distinctly to be seen from the deck of the Coquette still riding at her anchor. The cry of "a stranger in the cove!" which a few moments before came out of one of the tops, caused no surprise in the commander, while the crew, wondering, but obedient, began for the first time, to perceive the object of their strange manœuvres. Even

the officer next in authority to the captain, had not presumed to make any inquiry, though, now that the object of their search was so evidently in view, he felt emboldened to presume on his rank, and to venture a remark.

"It is a sweet craft!" said the staid lieutenant, yielding to an admiration natural to his habits, "and one that might serve as a yacht for the Queen! This is some trifler with the revenue, or perhaps a buccaneer from the islands. The fellow shows no ensign!"

"Give him notice, Sir, that he has to do with one who bears the royal commission," returned Ludlow, speaking from habit, and half-unconscious of what he said. "We must teach these rovers to respect a pennant."

The report of the cannon startled the absent man, and caused him to remember the order.

"Was that gun shotted?" he asked, in a tone that sounded like rebuke.

"Shotted but pointed wide, Sir; merely a

broad hint. We are no dealers in dumb show in the Coquette, Captain Ludlow."

"I would not injure the vessel, even should it prove a buccaneer. Be careful that nothing strikes her without an order."

"Ay, 'twill be well to take the beauty alive, Sir; so pretty a boat should not be broken up like an old hulk. Ha! there goes his bunting at last! He shows a white field—can the fellow be a Frenchman after all?"

The lieutenant took a glass, and for a moment applied it to his eye with the usual steadiness. Then he suffered the instrument to fall, and it would seem that he endeavoured to recal the different flags that he had seen during the experience of many years.

"This joker should come from some terra incognita," he said. "Here is a woman in his field, with an ugly countenance, too, unless the glass play me false—as I live, the rogue has her counterpart for a figure-head!—Will you look at the ladies, Sir?"

Ludlow took the glass, and it was not without curiosity that he turned it toward the colours the hardy smuggler dared to exhibit in presence of a cruiser. The vessels were, by this time, sufficiently near each other to enable him to distinguish the swarthy features and malign smile of the sea-green lady, whose form was wrought in the field of the ensign, with the same art as that which he had seen so often displayed in other parts of the brigantine. Amazed at the daring of the free-trader, he returned the glass, and continued to pace the deck in silence. There stood near the two speakers an officer, whose head and form began to shew the influence of time, and who, from his position, had unavoidably been an auditor of what passed. Though the eye of this person, who was the sailing-master of the sloop, was rarely off the threatening cloud, except to glance along the wide shew of canvass that was spread, he found a moment to take a look at the stranger.

"A half-rigged brig, with her fore-top-gallant-mast fidded abaft, a double martingale, and a standing gaft," observed the methodical and technical mariner, as another would have recounted the peculiarities of complexion, or of feature, in some individual who was the subject of a personal description. "The rogue has no need of showing his brazen-faced trull to be known! I chased him for six-and-thirty hours in the chops of St. George's, no later than the last season, and the fellow ran about us like a dolphin playing under a ship's fore-foot. We had him, now on our weather bow, and now crossing our course, and, once in a while, in our wake, as if he had been a Mother Carey's chicken looking for our crumbs. He seems snug enough in that cove, to be sure, and yet I'll wager the pay of any month in the twelve, that he gives us the slip. Captain Ludlow, the brigantine under our lee, here, in Spermaceti, is the well-known Skimmer of the Seas!"

"The Skimmer of the Seas!" echoed twenty voices, in a manner to show the interest created by the unexpected information.

"I'll swear to his character before any admiralty judge in England, or even in France, should there be occasion to go into an outlandish court; but no need of an oath, when here is a written account I took with my own hands, having the chase in plain view, at noonday." While speaking, the sailing-master drew a tobacco-box from his pocket, and removing a coil of pig-tail, he came to a deposit of memorandums, that vied with the weed itself in colours. "Now, gentlemen," he continued, "you shall have her build, as justly as if the master-carpenter had laid it down with his rule. 'Remember to bring a muff of marten's fur from America, for Mrs. Trysail—buy it in London, and swear'—this is not the paper—I let your boy, Mr. Luff, stow away the last entry of tobacco for me, and the young dog has disturbed every document I own. This is the way

the government accounts get jammed, when Parliament wants to overhaul them. But I suppose young blood will have its run! I let a monkey into a church of a Saturday night myself, when a youngster, and he made such stowage of the prayer-books, that the whole parish was by the ears for six months, and there is one quarrel between two old ladies that has not been made up to this hour. Ah, here we have it.—'Skimmer of the Seas.—Full rigg'd forward, with fore-and-aft-mainsail abaft; a gaff-top-sail; taunt in his spars, with light top-hamper; neat in his gear, as any beauty. Carries a ring-tail in light weather; main-boom like a frigate's top-sail-yard, with a main-top-mast-stay-sail as big as a jib. Low in the water, with a woman figure-head; carries sail more like a devil than a human being, and lies within five points, when jammed up hard on a wind.'—Here are marks by which one of Queen Anne's maids of honour might know the rogue,

and there you see them all, as plainly as human nature can show them in a ship!"

"The Skimmer of the Seas!" repeated the young officers, who had crowded round the veteran tar, to hear this characteristic description of the notorious free-trader.

"Skimmer or flyer, we have him now, dead under our lee, with a sandy beach on three of his sides and the wind in his eye!" cried the first lieutenant. "You shall have an opportunity, Master Trysail, of correcting your account by actual measurement."

The sailing-master shook his head, like one who doubted, and again turned his eye on the approaching cloud.

The Coquette, by this time, had run so far as to have the entrance of the cove open, and she was separated from her object only by a distance of a few cable's length. In obedience to an order given by Ludlow, all the light canvass of the ship was taken in, and the vessel was left under her three top-sails and jib. There re-

mained, however, a question as to the channel, for it was not usual for ships of the Coquette's draught to be seen in that quarter of the bay, and the threatening state of the weather rendered caution doubly necessary. The pilot shrunk from a responsibility which did not properly belong to his office, since the ordinary navigation had no concern with that secluded place, and even Ludlow, stimulated as he was by so many powerful motives, hesitated to incur a risk which greatly exceeded his duty. There was something so remarkable in the apparent security of the smuggler, that it naturally led to the belief he was certain of being protected by some known obstacle, and it was decided to sound, before the ship was hazarded. An offer to carry the free-trader with the boats, though plausible in itself, and perhaps the wisest course of all, was rejected by the commander, on an evasive plea of its being of uncertain issue, though in truth, because he felt an interest in one whom he believed the brigantine to contain, which en-

tirely forbade the idea of making the vessel the scene of so violent a struggle. A yawl was therefore lowered into the water, the main-top-sail of the ship was thrown to the mast, and Ludlow himself, accompanied by the pilot and the master, proceeded to ascertain the best approach to the smuggler. A flash of lightning, with one of those thunder-claps that are wont to be more terrific on this continent than in the other hemisphere, warned the young mariner of the necessity of haste, if he would regain his ship, before the cloud, which still threatened them, should reach the spot where she lay. The boat pulled briskly into the cove, both the master and the pilot sounding on each side, as fast as the leads could be cast from their hands and recovered.

"This will do," said Ludlow, when they had ascertained that they could enter. "I would lay the ship as close as possible to the brigantine, for I distrust her quiet. We will go nearer."

"A brazen witch, and one whose saucy eye and pert figure might lead any honest mariner into contraband, or even into a sea-robbery!" half-whispered Trysail, perhaps afraid to trust his voice within hearing of a creature that seemed almost endowed with the faculties of life. "Ay, this is the hussy! I know her by the book, and her green jacket! But where are her people? The vessel is as quiet as the royal vault on a coronation-day, when the last king and those who went before him, commonly have the place to themselves. Here would be a pretty occasion to throw a boat's crew on her decks, and hawl down yon impudent ensign, which bears the likeness of this wicked lady so bravely in the air, if—"

"If what?" asked Ludlow, struck with the plausible character of the proposal.

"Why, if one were sure of the nature of such a minx, Sir; for to own the truth, I would rather deal with a regularly built Frenchman, who shewed his guns honestly, and kept such a

jabbering aboard that one might tell his bearings in the dark.—The creature spoke ! "

Ludlow did not reply, for a heavy crash of thunder succeeded the vivid glow of a flash of lightning, and glared so suddenly across the swarthy lineaments as to draw the involuntary exclamation from Trysail. The intimation that came from the cloud, was not to be disregarded. The wind, which had so long varied, began to be heard in the rigging of the silent brigantine, and the two elements exhibited unequivocal evidence, in their menacing and fitful colours, of the near approach of the gust. The young sailor, with an absorbing interest, turned his eyes on his ship. The yards were on the caps, the bellying canvass was fluttering far to leeward, and twenty or thirty human forms on each spar, shewed that the nimble-fingered topmen were gathering in, and knotting the sails down to a close reef.

" Give way, men, for your lives ! " cried the excited Ludlow.

A single dash of the oars was heard, and the yawl was already twenty feet from the mysterious image. Then followed a desperate struggle to regain the cruiser, ere the gust should strike her. The sullen murmur of the wind, rushing through the rigging of the ship, was audible some time before they reached her side, and the struggles between the fabric and the elements, were at moments so evident, as to cause the young commander to fear he would be too late. The foot of Ludlow touched the deck of the Coquette at the instant the weight of the squall fell upon her sails. He no longer thought of any interest but that of the moment, for with all the feelings of a seaman, his mind was now full of his ship.

"Let run every thing!" shouted the ready officer, in a voice that made itself heard above the roar of the wind. "Clue down, and hand! Away aloft, you top-men!—lay out!—furl away!"

These orders were given in rapid succession,

and without a trumpet, for the young man could at need speak loud as the tempest. They were succeeded by one of those exciting and fearful minutes that are so familiar to mariners. Each man was intent on his duty, while the elements worked their will around him, as madly as if the hand by which they are ordinarily restrained was for ever removed. The bay was a sheet of foam, while the rushing of the gust resembled the dull rumbling of a thousand chariots. The ship yielded to the pressure, until the water was seèn gushing through her lee scuppers; and her tall line of masts inclined towards the plane of the bay, as if the end of the yards were about to dip into the water. But this was no more than the first submission to the shock. The well-moulded fabric recovered its balance, and struggled through its element, as if conscious that there was security only in motion. Ludlow glanced his eye to leeward. The opening of the cove was favourably situated, and he caught a glimpse of the spars of the brigantine,

rocking violently in the squall. He spoke to demand if the anchors were clear, and then he was heard shouting again from his station in the weather gang-way—

"Hard a-weather!"

The first efforts of the cruiser to obey her helm, stripped as she was of canvass, were laboured and slow. But when her head began to fall off, the driving scud was scarce swifter than her motion. At that moment the sluices of the cloud opened, and a torrent of rain mingled in the uproar, and added to the confusion. Nothing was now visible but the lines of the falling water, and the sheet of white foam through which the ship was glancing.

"Here is the land, Sir!" bellowed Trysail, from a cat-head, where he stood resembling some venerable sea-god, dripping with his native element; "we are passing it, like a race-horse!"

"See your bowers clear!" shouted back the captain.

" Ready, Sir, ready—"

Ludlow motioned to the men at the wheel to bring the ship to the wind, and when her way was sufficiently deadened, two ponderous anchors dropped, at another signal, into the water. The vast fabric was not checked without a further and tremendous struggle. When the bows felt the restraint, the ship swung head to wind, and fathom after fathom of the enormous ropes was extracted by surges so violent as to cause the hull to quiver to its centre. But the first lieutenant and Trysail were no novices in their duty, and, in less than a minute, they had secured the vessel steadily at her anchors. When this important service was performed, officers and crew stood looking at each other, like men who had just made a hazardous and fearful experiment. The view again opened, and objects on the land became visible, through the still falling rain. The change was like that from night to day. Men who had passed their lives on the sea drew long and relieving breaths,

conscious that the danger was happily passed. As the more pressing interest of their own situation abated, they remembered the object of their search. All eyes were turned in quest of the smuggler, but, by some inexplicable means, he had disappeared.

"The Skimmer of the Seas!" and "What has become of the brigantine?" were exclamations that the discipline of a royal cruiser could not repress. They were repeated by a hundred mouths, while twice as many eyes sought to find the beautiful fabric. All looked in vain. The spot where the Water Witch had so lately lain, was vacant, and no vestige of her wreck lined the shores of the cove. During the time the ship was handing her sails, and preparing to enter the cove, no one had leisure to look for the stranger, and after the vessel had anchored, until that moment, it was not possible to see her length on any side of them. There was still a dense mass of falling water moving seaward, but the curious and anxious eyes of Lud-

low made fruitless efforts to penetrate its secrets. Once, indeed, more than an hour after the gust had reached his own ship, and when the ocean in the offing was clear and calm, he thought he could distinguish, far to seaward, the delicate tracery of a vessel's spars, drawn against the horizon, without any canvass set. But a second look did not assure him of the truth of the conjecture.

There were many extraordinary tales related that night on board her Britannic Majesty's ship Coquette. The boatswain affirmed that, while piping below, in order to overhaul the cables, he had heard a screaming in the air, that sounded as if a hundred devils were mocking him, and which he told the gunner, in confidence, he believed was no more than the winding of a call on board the brigantine, who had taken occasion, when other vessels were glad to anchor, to get under way in her own fashion. There was also a fore-top-man named Robert Yarn, a fellow whose faculty for story-telling

equalled that of Scheherazade, and who not only asserted, but who confirmed the declaration by many strange oaths, that while he lay on the lee-fore-top-sail-yard-arm, stretching forth an arm to grasp the leech of the sail, a dark-looking female fluttered over his head, and caused her long hair to whisk into his face, in a manner that compelled him to shut his eyes, which gave occasion to a smart reprimand from the reefer of the top. There was a feeble attempt to explain this assault, by the man who lay next to Yarn, who affected to think the hair was no more than the end of a gasket whipping in the wind; but his ship-mate, who had pulled one of the oars of the yawl, soon silenced this explanation, by the virtue of his long-established reputation for veracity. Even Trysail ventured several mysterious conjectures concerning the fate of the brigantine, in the gun-room, but on returning from the duty of sounding the inlet, whither he had been sent by his captain, he was less communicative and more thoughtful than

usual. It appeared, indeed, from the surprise that was manifested by every officer that heard the report of the quarter-master, who had given the casts of the lead on this service, that no one in the ship, with the exception of Alderman Van Beverout, was at all aware that there was rather more than two fathoms of water in that secret passage.

CHAPTER V.

"Sirs, take your places, and be vigilant."
Henry IV.

THE succeeding day was one in which the weather had a fixed character. The wind was east, and, though light, not fluctuating. The air had that thick and hazy appearance which properly belongs to the autumn in this climate, but which is sometimes seen at midsummer, when a dry wind blows from the ocean. The roll of the surf on the shore was regular and monotonous, and the currents of the air were so

steady as to remove every apprehension of a change. The moment to which the action of the tale is transferred, was in the earlier hours of the afternoon.

At that time the Coquette lay again at her anchors, just within the shelter of the cape. There were a few small sails to be seen passing up the bay, but the scene, as was common at that distant day, presented little of the activity of our own times to the eye. The windows of the Lust in Rust were again open, and the movement of the slaves in and about the villa, announced the presence of its master.

The Alderman was, in truth, at the hour named, passing the little lawn in front of la Cour des Fées, accompanied by Oloff Van Staats and the commander of the cruiser. It was evident, by the frequent glances which the latter threw in the direction of the pavilion, that he still thought of her who was absent, while the faculties of the two others were either in better subjection, or less stimulated by anxiety. One

who understood the character of the individual, and who was acquainted with the past, might have suspected, by this indifference on the part of the Patroon, placed as it was in such a singular contrast to a sort of mysterious animation which enlivened a countenance whose ordinary expression was placid content, that the young suitor thought less than formerly of the assets of old Etienne, and more of the secret pleasure he found in the singular incidents of which he had been a witness.

"Propriety and discretion!" observed the burgher, in reply to a remark of one of the young men, "I say again, for the twentieth time, that we shall have Alida Barbérie back among us, as handsome, as innocent, aye, and as rich as ever!—perhaps I should also say as wilful. A baggage, to worry her old uncle, and two honourable suitors, in so thoughtless a manner! Circumstances, gentlemen," continued the wary merchant, who saw that the value of the hand of which he had to dispose was some-

what reduced in the market, " have placed you on a footing in my esteem. Should my niece, after all, prefer Captain Ludlow for a partner in her worldly affairs, why it should not weaken friendship between the son of old Stephanus Van Staats and Myndert Van Beverout. Our grandmothers were cousins, and there should be charities in the same blood."

" I could not wish to press my suit," returned the Patroon, " when the lady has given so direct a hint that it is disagreeable—"

" Hint me no hints! Do you call this caprice of a moment, this trifling, as the captain here would call it, with the winds and tides, a hint? The girl has Norman blood in her veins, and she wishes to put animation into the courtship. If bargains were to be interrupted by a little cheapening of the buyer, and some affectation of waiting for a better market in the seller, her Majesty might as well order her custom-houses to be closed at once, and look to other sources for revenue. Let the girl's fancy have its swing,

and the profits of a year's peltry against thy rent-roll, we shall see her penitent for her folly, and willing to hear reason. My sister's daughter is no witch, to go journeying for ever about the world on a broomstick!"

"There is a tradition in our family," said Oloff Van Staats, his eye lighting with a mysterious excitement, while he affected to laugh at the folly he uttered, "that the great Poughkeepsie fortune-teller foretold in the presence of my grandmother, that a Patroon of Kinderhook should intermarry with a witch. So should I see la Belle in the position you name, it would not greatly alarm me."

"The prophecy was fulfilled at the wedding of thy father!" muttered Myndert, who, notwithstanding the outward levity with which he treated the subject, was not entirely free from secret reverence for the provincial soothsayers, some of whom continued in high repute, even to the close of the last century. "His son would not else have been so clever a youth! But

here is Captain Ludlow looking at the ocean, as if he expected to see my niece rise out of the water, in the shape of a mermaid."

The commander of the Coquette pointed to the object which attracted his gaze, and which, appearing as it did at that moment, was certainly not of a nature to lessen the faith of either of his companions in supernatural agencies.

It has been said that the wind was dry and the air misty, or rather so pregnant with a thin haze, as to give it the appearance of a dull, smoky light. In such a state of the weather, the eye, more especially of one placed on an elevation, is unable to distinguish what is termed the visible horizon at sea. The two elements become so blended, that our organs cannot tell where the water ends or where the void of the heavens commences. It is a consequence of this indistinctness, that any object seen beyond the apparent boundary of water, has the appearance of floating in the air. It is rare for the organs of a landsman to penetrate

beyond the apparent limits of the sea, when the atmosphere exhibits this peculiarity, though the practised eye of a mariner often detects vessels, which are hid from others merely because they are not sought in the proper place. The deception may also be aided by a slight degree of refraction.

"Here," said Ludlow, pointing in a line that would have struck the water some two or three leagues in the offing. "First bring the chimney of yonder low building on the plain, in a range with the dead oak on the shore, and then raise your eyes slowly, till they strike a sail."

"That ship is navigating the heavens!" exclaimed Myndert! "Thy grandmother was a sensible woman, Patroon; she was a cousin of my pious progenitor, and there is no knowing what two clever old ladies in their time may have heard and seen, when such sights as this are beheld in our own!"

"I am as litttle disposed as another to put

faith in incredible things," gravely returned Oloff Van Staats, "and yet if required to give my testimony, I should be reluctant to say that yonder vessel is not floating in the heavens!"

"You might not give it to that effect in safety," said Ludlow. "It is no other than a half-rigged brigantine, on a taut bowline, though she bears no great show of canvass. Mr. Van Beverout, her Majesty's cruiser is about to put to sea."

Myndert heard this declaration in visible dissatisfaction. He spoke of the virtue of patience, and of the comforts of the solid ground; but when he found the intention of the Queen's servant was not to be shaken, he reluctantly professed an intention of repeating the personal experiment of the preceding day. Accordingly within half an hour, the whole party were on the banks of the Shrewsbury, and about to embark in the barge of the Coquette.

"Adieu, Monsieur François," said the Alderman, nodding his head to the ancient valet,

who stood with a disconsolate eye on the shore. "Have a care of the moveables in la Cour des Fées; we may have further use for them."

"Mais, Monsieur Beevre, mon devoir, et, ma foi, suppose la mer was plus agréable, mon désir shall be to suivre Mam'selle Alide. Jamais personne de la famille Barbérie love de sea; mais Monsieur, comment faire? I shall die sur la mer de douleur; and I shall die d'ennui, to rester ici, bien sûr!"

"Come then, faithful François," said Ludlow; "you shall follow your young mistress, and perhaps on further trial, you may be disposed to think the lives of us seamen more tolerable than you had believed."

After an eloquent expression of countenance, in which the secretly amused though grave-looking boat's crew, thought the old man was about to give a specimen of his powers of anticipation, the affectionate domestic entered the barge. Ludlow felt for his distress, and encouraged him by a look of approbation. The

language of kindness does not always need a tongue, and the conscience of the valet smote him, with the idea that he might have expressed himself too strongly concerning a profession to which the other had devoted life and hopes.

" La mer, Monsieur le Capitaine," he said, with an acknowledging reverence, " est un vaste théâtre de la gloire. Voilà Messieurs de Tourville et Dougay Trouin ; ce sont des hommes vraiment remarquables ! mais, Monsieur, quant à toute la famille de Barbérie, we have toujours un sentiment plus favorable pour la terre."

" I wish your whimsical jade of a mistress, Master François, had found the same sentiment," dryly observed Myndert : " for let me tell you, this cruising about in a suspicious vessel is as little creditable to her judgment as——Cheer up, Patroon, the girl is only putting thy mettle to the trial, and the sea-air will do no damage to her complexion or her pocket. A little predilection for salt water must raise the girl in your estimation, Captain Ludlow !"

"If the predilection goes no further than to the element, Sir," was the caustic answer. "But, deluded or not, erring or deceived, Alida Barbérie is not to be deserted, the victim of a villain's arts. I did love your niece, Mr. Van Beverout, and——pull with a will, men; fellows, are you sleeping on the oars?"

The sudden manner in which the young man interrupted himself, and the depth of tone in which he spoke to the boat's crew, put an end to the discourse. It was apparent that he wished to say no more, and that he even regretted the weakness which had induced him to say so much. The remainder of the distance between the shore and the ship was passed in silence.

When Queen Anne's cruiser was seen doubling Sandy Hook, past meridian on the 6th of June (sea-time), in the year 17— the wind, as stated in an ancient journal, which was kept by one of the midshipmen, and is still in existence, was light steady at south, and by west-

half-west. It appears, by the same document, that the vessel took her departure at seven o'clock, p. m., the point of Sandy Hook bearing west-half-south, distant three leagues. On the same page which contains these particulars, it is observed, under the head of remarks—" Ship under starboard steering-sails, forward and aft, making six knots. A suspicious half-rigged brigantine lying-to in the eastern board, under her mainsail, with fore-top-sail to the mast; light and lofty sails and jib loose; foresail in the brails. Her starboard steering-sail-booms appear to be rigged out, and the gear rove, ready for a run. This vessel is supposed to be the celebrated Hermaphrodite, the Water Witch, commanded by the notorious Skimmer of the Seas, and the same fellow who gave us so queer a slip yesterday. The Lord send us a cap-full of wind, and we'll try his heels before morning!—Passengers, Alderman Van Beverout, of the second ward of the City of New York, in her Majesty's province of the

same name; Oloff Van Staats, Esq., commonly called the Patroon of Kinderhook, of the same colony; and a qualmish-looking old chap, in a sort of marine's jacket, who answers when hailed as Francis. A rum set taken altogether, though they seem to suit the Captain's fancy. Mem—Each lipper of a wave works like tartar emetic on the lad in marine gear."

As no description of ours can give a more graphic account of the position of the two vessels in question at the time named, than that which is contained in the foregoing extract, we shall take up the narrative at that moment, which the reader will see must, in the 33° of latitude, and in the month of June, have been shortly after the close of the day.

The young votary of Neptune, whose opinions have just been quoted, had indeed presumed on his knowledge of the localities in affirming the distance and position of the cape, since the low sandy point was no longer visible from the deck. The sun had set, as seen from

the vessel, precisely in the mouth of the Rariton, and the shadows from Navesink, or Neversink, as the hills are vulgarly called, were thrown far upon the sea. In short, the night was gathering round the mariners, with every appearance of settled and mild weather, but of a darkness deeper than is common on the ocean. Under such circumstances, the great object was to keep on the track of the chase, during the time when she must necessarily be hid from their sight.

Ludlow walked into the lee gang-way of his ship, and leaning with his elbow on the empty hammock-cloths, he gazed long and in silence at the object of his pursuit. The Water Witch was lying in the quarter of the horizon most favourable to being seen. The twilight, which still fell out of the heavens, was without glare in that direction, and for the first time that day, he saw her in her true proportions. The admiration of a seaman was blended with the other sensations of the young man. The

brigantine lay in the position that exhibited her exquisitely moulded hull and rakish rig to the most advantage. The head having come to the wind, was turned towards her pursuer, and as the bows rose on some swell that was heavier than common, Ludlow saw, or fancied he saw, the mysterious image still perched on her cut-water, holding the book to the curious, and ever pointing with its finger across the waste of water. A movement of the hammock-cloths caused the young sailor to bend his head aside, and he then saw that the master had drawn as near to his person as discipline would warrant. Ludlow had a great respect for the professional attainments that his inferior unquestionably possessed; and he was not without some consideration for the chances of a fortune, which had not done much to reward the privations and the services of a seaman old enough to be his father. The recollection of these facts always disposed him to be indulgent to a man who

had little beyond his seaman-like character and long experience to recommend him.

" We are likely to have a thick night, Master Trysail," said the young captain, without deeming it necessary to change his look, " and we may yet be brought on a bowline before yonder insolent is overhauled."

The master smiled, like one who knew more than he expressed, and gravely shook his head.

" We may have many pulls on our bowlines, and some squaring of yards, too, before the Coquette (the figure-head of the sloop of war was also a female) gets near enough to the dark-faced woman under the bowsprit of the brigantine, to whisper her mind. You and I have been nigh enough to see the white of her eyes, and to count the teeth she shows, in that cunning grin of her's, and what good has come of our visit? I am but a subordinate, Captain Ludlow, and I know my duty too well not to be silent in a squall, and I hope too well not

to know how to speak when my commander wishes the opinions of his officers at a council, and therefore mine, just now, is perhaps different from that of some others in this ship that I will not name, who are good men too, though none of the oldest."

"And what is thy opinion, Trysail?—the ship is doing well, and she carries her canvass bravely."

"The ship behaves like a well-bred young woman in the presence of the Queen—modest but stately; but of what use is canvass, in a chase where witchcraft breeds squalls, and shortens sail in one vessel, while it gives flying kites to another? If her Majesty, God bless her! should be over-persuaded to do so silly a thing as to give old Tom Trysail a ship, and the said ship lay just here-a-way, where the Coquette is now getting along so cleverly, why then, as in duty bound, I know very well what her commander would do."

"Which would be—"

"To in all studding sails, and bring the vessel on the wind."

"That would be to carry you to the southward, while the chase lies here in the eastern board!"

"Who can say how long she will lie there! They told us in York, that there was a Frenchman, of our burthen and metal, rummaging about among the fishermen, lower down on the coast. Now, Sir, no man knows that the war is half over better than myself, for not a ha'penny of prize-money has warmed my pocket these three years;—but, as I was saying, if a Frenchman will come off his ground, and will run his ship into troubled water, why, whose fault is it but his own? A pretty affair might be made out of such a mistake, Captain Ludlow, whereas running after yonder brigantine, is flapping out the Queen's canvass for nothing. The vessel's bottom will want new sheating, in my poor opinion, before you catch him."

"I know not, Trysail," returned his captain, glancing an eye aloft, "every thing draws, and the ship never went along with less trouble to herself. We shall not know which has the longest legs, till the trial is made."

"You may judge of the rogue's speed by his impudence. There he lies, waiting for us, like a line-of-battle-ship lying-to for an enemy to come down. Though a man of some experience in my way, I have never seen a lord's son more sure of promotion, than that same brigantine seems to be of his heels!—If this old Frenchman goes on with his faces much longer, he will turn himself inside out, and then we shall get an honest look at him, for these fellows never carry their true characters above board, like a fair-dealing Englishman.—Well, Sir, as I was remarking, yon rover, if rover he be, has more faith in his canvass than in the church. I make no doubt, Captain Ludlow, that the brigantine went through the inlet while we were handing our top-sails yesterday,

for I am none of those who are in a hurry to give credit to any will-o'-the-wisp tale, besides which, I sounded the passage with my own hands, and know the thing to be possible with the wind blowing heavy over the taffrail; still, Sir, human nature is human nature, and what is the oldest seaman, after all, but a man? and so, to conclude, I would rather any day chase a Frenchman, whose disposition is known to me, than have the credit of making traverses for eight and forty hours in the wake of one of these flyers, with little hope of getting him within hail."

"You forget, Master Trysail, that I have been aboard the chase, and know something of his build and character?"

"They say as much aboard here," returned the old tar, drawing nearer to the person of his captain, under an impulse of strong curiosity, "though none presume to be acquainted with the particulars. I am not one of those who ask impertinent questions, more especially under her

Majesty's pennant, for the worst enemy I have will not say I am very womanish. One would think, however, that there was neat work on board a craft that is so prettily moulded about her water-lines?"

"She is perfect as to construction, and admirable in gear."

"I thought as much by instinct! Her commander need not, however, be any the more sure of keeping her off the rocks, on that account. The prettiest young woman in our parish was wrecked, as one might say, on the shoals of her own good looks, having cruised once too often in the company of the squire's son. A comely wench she was, though she luffed athwart all her old companions when the young lord of the manor fell into her wake. Well, she did bravely enough, Sir, as long as she could carry her flying kites, and make a fair wind of it; but when the squall of which I spoke overtook her, what could she do but keep away before it; and as others, who are

snugger in their morals, hove-to as it were, under the storm sails of religion and such matters as they had picked up in the catechism, she drifted to leeward of all honest society! A neatly built and clean-heeled hussy was that girl, and I am not certain, by any means, that Mrs. Trysail would this day call herself the lady of a Queen's officer, had the other known how to carry sail in the company of her betters."

The worthy master drew a long breath, which possibly was a nautical sigh, but which certainly had more of the north wind than of the zephyr in its breathing, and he had recourse to the little box of iron whence he usually drew consolation.

"I have heard of this accident before," returned Ludlow, who had sailed as a midshipman in the same vessel with, and indeed as a subordinate to, his present inferior; "but from all accounts, you have little reason to regret the

change, as I hear the best character of your present worthy partner."

"No doubt, Sir, no doubt. I defy any man in the ship to say that I am a backbiter, even against my own wife, with whom I have a sort of lawful right to deal candidly. I make no complaints, and am a happy man at sea, and I piously hope Mrs. Traysail knows how to submit to her duty at home.—I suppose you see, Sir, that the chase has hauled his yards, and is getting his fore-tack aboard?" Ludlow, whose eye did not often turn from the brigantine, nodded assent, and the master having satisfied himself, by actual inspection, that every sail in the Coquette did its duty, continued—"The night is coming on thick, and we shall have occasion for all our eyes, to keep the rogue in view, when he begins to change his bearings—but, as I was saying, if the commander of yonder half-rig is too vain of her good looks, he may yet wreck her in his pride! The

rogue has a desperate character as a smuggler, though, for my own part, I cannot say that I look on such men with as unfavourable an eye as some others. This business of trade seems to be a sort of chase between one man's wits and another man's wits, and the dullest goer must be content to fall to leeward. When it comes to be a question of revenue, why, he who goes free is lucky, and he who is caught, a prize. I have known a flag-officer look the other way, Captain Ludlow, when his own effects were passing duty free; and as to your admiral's lady, she is a great patroness of the contraband. I do not deny, Sir, that a smuggler must be caught, and when caught condemned, after which there must be a fair distribution among the captors; but all that I mean to say is, that there are worse men in the world than your British smuggler—such, for instance, as your Frenchman, your Dutchman, or your Don."

"These are heretodox opinions for a Queen's

servant," said Ludlow, as much inclined to smile as to frown.

"I hope I know my duty too well to preach them to the ship's company, but a man may say that, in a philosophical way, before his captain, that he would not let run into a midshipman's ear. Though no lawyer, I know what is meant by swearing a witness to the truth and nothing but the truth. I wish the Queen got the last, God bless her!—several worn-out ships would then be broken up, and better vessels sent to sea in their places. But, Sir, speaking in a religious point of view, what is the difference between passing in a trunk of finery, with a duchess's name on the brass plate, or in passing in gin enough to fill a cutter's hold?"

"One would think a man of your years, Mr. Trysail, would see the difference between robbing the revenue of a guinea, and of robbing it of a thousand pounds."

"Which is just the difference between retail and wholesale, and that is no trifle, I admit,

Captain Ludlow, in a commercial country, especially in genteel life. Still, Sir, revenue is the country's right, and therefore I allow a smuggler to be a bad man, only not so bad as those I have just named, particularly your Dutchman! The Queen is right to make those rogues lower their flags to her in the narrow seas, which are her lawful property, because England, being a wealthy island, and Holland no more than a bit of bog turned up to dry, it is reasonable that we should have the command afloat. No, Sir, though none of your outcriers against a man because he has had bad luck in a chase with a revenue cutter, I hope I know what the natural rights of an Englishman are. We must be masters here, Captain Ludlow —will ye nill ye—and look to the main chances of trade and manufactures!"

"I had not thought you so accomplished a statesman, Master Trysail!"

"Though a poor man's son, Captain Ludlow, I am a free-born Briton, and my education

has not been entirely overlooked. I hope I know something of the constitution, as well as my betters. Justice and honour being an Englishman's mottoes, we must look manfully to the main chance. We are none of your flighty talkers, but a reasoning people, and there is no want of deep thinkers on the little island; and therefore, Sir, taking all together, why England must stick up for her rights! Here is your Dutchman, for instance, a ravenous cormorant—a fellow with a throat wide enough to swallow all the gold of the Great Mogul, if he could get at it—and yet a vagabond who has not even a fair footing on the earth, if the truth must be spoken! Well, Sir, shall England give up her rights to a nation of such blackguards? No, Sir, our venerable constitution and mother church itself forbid; and therefore I say, dam'me, lay them aboard, if they refuse us any of our natural rights, or shew a wish to bring us down to their own dirty level!"

"Reasoned like a countryman of Newton, and with an eloquence that would do credit to Cicero! I shall endeavour to digest your ideas at my leisure, since they are much too solid food to be disposed of in a minute. At present we will look to the chase, for I see, by the aid of my glass, that he has set his studding sails and is beginning to draw ahead."

This remark closed the dialogue between the captain and his subordinate. The latter quitted the gangway with that secret and pleasurable sensation, which communicates itself to all who have reason to think they have delivered themselves creditably of a train of profound thought.

It was, in truth, time to lend every faculty to the movements of the brigantine, for there was great reason to apprehend that, by changing her direction, in the darkness, she might elude them. The night was fast closing on the Coquette, and at each moment the horizon narrowed around her, so that it was only at uncertain intervals the men aloft could distinguish

the position of the chase. While the two vessels were thus situated, Ludlow joined his guests on the quarter-deck.

"A wise man will trust to his wits what cannot be done by force," said the Alderman. "I do not pretend to be much of a mariner, Captain Ludlow, though I once spent a week in London, and I have crossed the ocean seven times to Rotterdam. We did little in our passages by striving to force nature. When the nights came in dark, as at present, the honest schippers were content to wait for better times, by which means we were sure not to miss our road, and of finally arriving at the destined port in safety."

"You saw that the brigantine was opening his canvass when last seen, and he that would move fast, must have recourse to his sails."

"One never knows what may be brewing up there in the heavens, when the eye cannot see the colour of a cloud. I have little knowledge of the character of the Skimmer of the

Seas beyond that which common fame gives him; but, in the poor judgment of a landsman, we should do better by showing lanterns in different parts of the ship, lest some homeward-bound vessel do us an injury, and awaiting until the morning for further movements."

"We are spared the trouble, for look, the insolent has set a light himself, as if to invite us to follow! This temerity exceeds belief! To dare to trifle thus with one of the swiftest cruisers in the English fleet! See that every thing draws, gentlemen, and take a pull at all the sheets. Hail the tops, Sir, and make sure that every thing is home."

The order was succeeded by the voice of the officer of the watch, who inquired, as directed, if each sail was distended to the utmost. Force was applied to some of the ropes, and then a general quiet succeeded to the momentary activity.

The brigantine had indeed shewed a light, as if in mockery of the attempt of the royal

cruiser. Though secretly stung by this open contempt of their speed, the officers of the Coquette found themselves relieved from a painful and anxious duty. Before this beacon was seen, they were obliged to exert their senses to the utmost, in order to get occasional glimpses of the position of the chase, while they now steered in confidence for the brilliant little spot that was gently rising and falling with the waves.

"I think we near him," half-whispered the eager captain, "for see, there is some design visible on the sides of the lantern. Hold! Ay, 'tis the face of a woman, as I live!"

"The men of the yawl report that the rover shews this symbol in many parts of his vessel, and we know he had the impudence to set it yesterday, in our presence even, on his ensign."

"True—true; take you the glass, Mr. Luff, and tell me if there be not a woman's face sketched in front of that light—we certainly near him fast—let there be silence fore and aft the ship. The rogues mistake our bearings!"

"A saucy-looking jade as one might wish to see!" returned the lieutenant. "Her impudent laugh is visible to the naked eye."

"See all clear for laying him aboard! Get a party to throw on his decks, Sir! I will lead them myself."

These orders were given in an under tone, and rapidly. They were promptly obeyed. In the mean time, the Coquette continued to glide gently ahead, her sails thickening with the dew, and every breath of the heavy air acting with increased power on their surfaces. The boarders were stationed, orders were given for the most profound silence, and as the ship drew nearer to the light, even the officers were commanded not to stir. Ludlow stationed himself in the mizen channels, to cun the ship, and his directions were repeated to the quarter-master in a loud whisper.

"The night is so dark we are certainly unseen!" observed the young man to his second in command, who stood at his elbow. "They

have unaccountably mistaken our position. Observe how the face of the painting becomes more distinct—one can see even the curls of the hair.—Luff, Sir! luff—we will run him aboard on his weather quarter."

"The fool must be lying-to!" returned the lieutenant. "Even your witches fail of common sense at times! Do you see which way he has his head, Sir?"

"I see nothing but the light. It is so dark that our own sails are scarcely visible—and yet I think here are his yards, a little forward of our lee beam."

"'Tis our own lower boom. I got it out in readiness for the other tack, in case the knave should ware. Are we not running too full?"

"Luff you may a little,—luff, or we shall crush him!"

As this order was given, Ludlow passed swiftly forward. He found the boarders ready for a spring, and he rapidly gave his orders.

The men were told to carry the brigantine at every hazard, but not to offer violence unless serious resistance was made. They were thrice enjoined not to enter the cabins; and the young man expressed a generous wish that, in every case, the Skimmer of the Seas might be taken alive. By the time these directions were given, the light was so near that the malign countenance of the sea-green lady was seen in every lineament. Ludlow looked in vain for the spars, in order to ascertain in which direction the head of the brigantine lay; but trusting to luck, he saw that the decisive moment was come.

"Starboard, and run him aboard!—Away there, you boarders, away! Heave with your grapnels; heave men! with a long swing, heave! Meet her with the helm—hard down—meet her—steady!" was shouted in a clear, full, and steady voice, that seemed to deepen at each mandate which issued from the lips of the young captain.

The boarders cheered heartily, and leaped

into the rigging. The Coquette readily and rapidly yielded to the power of her rudder. First inclining to the light, and then sweeping up towards the wind again, in another instant she was close upon the chase. The irons were thrown, the men once more shouted, and all on board held their breaths in expectation of the crash of the meeting hulls. At that moment of high excitement, the woman's face rose a short distance in the air, seemed to smile in derision of their attempt, and suddenly disappeared. The ship passed steadily ahead, while no noise but the sullen wash of the waters was audible. The boarding-irons were heard falling heavily into the sea, and the Coquette rapidly overrun the spot where the light had been seen, without sustaining any shock. Though the clouds lifted a little, and the eye might embrace a circuit of a few hundred feet, there certainly was nothing to be seen within its range but the unquiet element, and the stately cruiser of Queen Anne floating on its bosom.

Though its effects were different on the differently constituted minds of those who witnessed the singular incident, the disappointment was general. The common impression was certainly unfavourable to the earthly character of the brigantine, and when opinions of this nature once get possession of the ignorant, they are not easily removed. Even Trysail, though experienced in the arts of those who trifle with the revenue laws, was much inclined to believe that this was no vulgar case of floating lights or false beacons, but a manifestation that others besides those who had been regularly trained to the sea were occasionally to be found on the waters. If Captain Ludlow thought differently, he saw no sufficient reason to enter into an explanation with those who were bound silently to obey. He paced the quarter-deck for many minutes, and then issued his orders to the equally disappointed lieutenants. The light canvass of the Coquette was taken in, the studding-sail-gear unrove, and the

booms secured. The ship was then brought to the wind, and her courses having been hauled up, the fore-topsail was thrown to the mast. In this position the cruiser lay waiting for the morning light, in order to give greater certainty to her movements.

CHAPTER VI.

"I, John Turner,
Am master and owner,
Of a high-deck'd schooner,
That's bound to Carolina—"
etc. etc. etc. etc.

Coasting Song.

It is not necessary to say with how much interest Alderman Van Beverout and his friend the Patroon had witnessed all the proceedings on board the Coquette. Something very like an exclamation of pleasure escaped the former when it was known that the ship had missed the brigantine, and that there was now little probability of overtaking her that night.

"Of what use is it to chase your fire-flies

about the ocean, Patroon?" muttered the Alderman in the ear of Oloff Van Staats. "I have no further knowledge of this Skimmer of the Seas than is decent in the principal of a commercial house—but reputation is like a sky-rocket, that may be seen from afar! Her Majesty has no ship that can overtake the free-trader, and why fatigue the innocent vessel for nothing?"

"Captain Ludlow has other desires than the mere capture of the brigantine," returned the laconic and sententious Patroon. "The opinion that Alida de Barbérie is in her has great influence with that gentleman."

"This is strange apathy, Mr. Van Staats, in one who is as good as engaged to my niece, if he be not actually married. Alida Barbérie has great influence with that gentleman! And pray, with whom that knows her has she not influence?"

"The sentiment in favour of the young lady in general is favourable."

"Sentiment and favours! am I to understand, Sir, by this coolness, that our bargain is broken, that the two fortunes are not to be brought together, and that the lady is not to be your wife?"

"Harkee, Mr. Van Beverout,—one who is saving of his income and sparing of his words, can have no pressing necessity for the money of others, and on occasion he may afford to speak plainly. Your niece has shown so decided a preference for another, that it has materially lessened the liveliness of my regard."

"It were a pity that so much animation should fail of its object! it would be a sort of stoppage in the affairs of Cupid! Men should deal candidly in all business transactions, Mr. Van Staats, and you will permit me to ask, as for a final settlement, if your mind is changed in regard to the daughter of old Etienne de Barbérie or not?"

"Not changed, but quite decided," returned the young Patroon. "I cannot say that I wish

the successor of my mother to have seen so much of the world. We are a family that is content with our situation, and new customs would derange my household."

"I am no wizard, Sir, but for the benefit of a son of my old friend Stephanus Van Staats, I will venture for once on a prophecy. You will marry, Mr. Van Staats—yes, marry; and you will wive, Sir, with—prudence prevents me from saying with whom you will wive—but you may account yourself a lucky man, if it be not with one who will cause you to forget house and home, lands and friends, manors and rents, and in short all the solid comforts of life. It would not surprise me to hear that the prediction of the Poughkeepsie fortune-teller should be fulfilled!"

"And what is your real opinion, Alderman Van Beverout, of the different mysterious events we have witnessed?" demanded the Patroon, in a manner to prove that the interest he took in the subject, completely smothered any displea-

sure he might otherwise have felt at so harsh a prophecy. "This sea-green lady is no common woman!"

"Sea-green and sky-blue!" interrupted the impatient burgher; "the hussy is but too common, Sir, and there is the calamity. Had she been satisfied with transacting her concerns in a snug and reasonable manner, and to have gone upon the high seas again, we should have had none of this foolery to disturb accounts which ought to have been considered settled. Mr. Van Staats, will you allow me to ask a few direct questions, if you can find leisure for their answer?"

The Patroon nodded his head in the affirmative.

"What do you suppose, Sir, to have become of my niece?"

"Eloped."

"And with whom?"

Van Staats of Kinderhook stretched an arm towards the open ocean and again nodded. The

Alderman mused a moment, and then he chuckled, as if some amusing idea had at once gotten the better of his ill-humour.

"Come, come, Patroon," he said, in his wonted amicable tone when addressing the lord of a hundred thousand acres, "this business is like a complicated account, a little difficult till one gets acquainted with the books, and then all becomes plain as your hand. There were referees in the settlement of the estate of Kobus Van Klink, whom I will not name; but what between the hand-writing of the old grocer, and some inaccuracy in the figures, they had but a blind time of it until they discovered which way the balance ought to come, and then by working backward and forward—which is the true spirit of your just referee—they got all straight in the end. Kobus was not very lucid in his statements, and he was a little apt to be careless of ink. His ledger might be called a book of the black art, for it was little else than fly-tracks and blots, though the last were found of great

assistance in rendering the statements satisfactory. By calling three of the biggest of them sugar hogsheads, a very fair balance was struck between him and a peddling Yankee, who was breeding trouble for the estate; and I challenge, even at this distant day, when all near interests in the results may be said to sleep, any responsible man to say that they did not look as much like those articles as any thing else. Something they must have been, and as Kobus dealt largely in sugar, there was also a strong moral probability that they were the said hogsheads. Come, come, Patroon; we shall have the jade back again in proper time. Thy ardour gets the better of reason; but this is the way with true love, which is none the worse for a little delay. Alida is one not to baulk thy merriment; these Norman wenches are not heavy of foot at a dance, or apt to go to sleep when the fiddles are stirring."

With this consolation Alderman Van Beverout saw fit to close the dialogue for the mo-

ment. How far he succeeded in bringing back the mind of the Patroon to its allegiance the result must shew, though we shall take this occasion to observe again, that the young proprietor found a satisfaction in the excitement of the present scene, that in the course of a short and little diversified life he had never before experienced.

While others slept, Ludlow passed most of the night on deck. He laid himself down in the hammock-cloths for an hour or two towards morning, though the wind did not sigh through the rigging louder than common without arousing him from his slumbers. At each low call of the officer of the watch to the crew, his head was raised to glance around the narrow horizon, and the ship never rolled heavily without causing him to awake. He believed that the brigantine was near, and for the first watch he was not without expectation that the two vessels might unexpectedly meet in the obscurity. When this hope failed the young seaman had

recourse to artifice in his turn, in order to entrap one who appeared so practised and so expert in the devices of the sea.

About midnight, when the watches were changed and the whole crew, with the exception of the idlers, were on deck, orders were given to hoist out the boats. This operation, one of exceeding toil and difficulty in lightly manned ships, was soon performed on board the Queen's cruiser, by the aid of yard and stay-tackles, to which the force of a hundred seamen was applied. When four of these little attendants on the ship were in the water, they were entered by their crews, prepared for serious service. Officers on whom Ludlow could rely were put in command of the three smallest, while he took charge of the fourth in person. When all were ready, and each inferior had received his especial instructions, they quitted the side of the vessel, pulling off in diverging lines into the gloom of the ocean. The boat of Ludlow had not gone fifty fathoms before he was per-

fectly conscious of the inutility of a chase, for the obscurity of the night was so great as to render the spars of his own ship nearly indistinct, even at that short distance. After pulling by compass some ten or fifteen minutes in a direction that carried him to windward of the Coquette, the young man commanded the crew to cease rowing, and prepared himself to await patiently for the result of his undertaking.

There was nothing to vary the monotony of such a scene for an hour, but the regular rolling of a sea that was but little agitated, a few occasional strokes of the oars, that were given in order to keep the barge in its place, or the heavy breathing of some smaller fish of the cetaceous kind, as it rose to the surface to inhale the atmosphere. In no quarter of the heavens was any thing visible; not even a star was peeping out, to cheer the solitude and silence of that solitary place. The men were nodding on the thwarts, and our young sailor was about to relinquish his design as

fruitless, when suddenly a noise was heard at no great distance from the spot where they lay. It was one of those sounds which would have been inexplicable to any but a seaman, but which conveyed a meaning to the ears of Ludlow, as plain as that which could be imparted by speech to a landsman. A moaning creak was followed by the low rumbling of a rope, as it rubbed on some hard or distended substance, and then succeeded the heavy flap of canvass, that, yielding first to a powerful impulse, was suddenly checked.

"Hear ye that?" exclaimed Ludlow, a little above a whisper. "'Tis the brigantine, gybing his main boom! Give way, men—see all ready to lay him aboard!"

The crew started from their slumbers, the plash of oars was heard, and, in the succeeding moment, the sails of a vessel, gliding through the obscurity nearly across their course, were visible.

"Now spring to your oars, men!" continued

Ludlow, with the eagerness of one engaged in chase. "We have him to advantage, and he is ours!—a long pull and a strong pull—steadily, boys, and together!"

The practised crew did their duty. It seemed but a moment, before they were close upon the chase.

"Another stroke of the oars and she is ours!" cried Ludlow. "Grapple!—to your arms!—away, boarders, away!"

These orders came on the ears of the men with the effect of martial blasts. The crew shouted, the clashing of arms was heard, and the tramp of feet on the deck of the vessel, announced the success of the enterprise. A minute of extreme activity and of noisy confusion followed. The cheers of the boarders had been heard at a distance, and rockets shot into the air from the other boats, whose crews answered the shouts with manful lungs. The whole ocean appeared in a momentary glow, and the roar of a gun from the Coquette added

to the fracas. The ship set several lanterns, in order to indicate her position, while blue lights, and other marine signals, were constantly burning in the approaching boats, as if those who guided them were anxious to intimidate the assailed by a show of numbers.

In the midst of this scene of sudden awakening from the most profound quiet, Ludlow began to look about him, in order to secure the principal objects of the capture. He had repeated his orders about entering the cabins, and concerning the person of the Skimmer of the Seas, among the other instructions given to the crews of the different boats, and the instant they found themselves in quiet possession of the prize, the young man dashed into the private recesses of the vessel, with a heart that throbbed even more violently than during the ardour of boarding. To cast open the door of a cabin beneath the high quarter-deck, and to descend to the level of its floor, were the acts of a moment. But disappointment and morti-

fication succeeded to triumph. A second glance was not necessary to show that the coarse work and foul smells he saw and encountered, did not belong to the commodious and even elegant accommodations of the brigantine.

"Here is no Water Witch!" he exclaimed aloud, under the impulse of sudden surprise.

"God be praised!" returned a voice, which was succeeded by a frightened face from out a state-room. "We were told the rover was in the offing, and thought the yells could come from nothing human!"

The blood which had been rushing through the arteries and veins of Ludlow so tumultuously, now crept into his cheeks, and was felt tingling at his fingers' ends. He gave a hurried order to his men to re-enter their boat, leaving every thing as they found it. A short conference between the commander of her Majesty's ship Coquette and the seaman of the state-room succeeded, and then the former hastened on deck, whence his passage into the barge

occupied but a moment. The boat pulled away from the fancied prize, amid a silence that was uninterrupted by any other sound than that of a song, which to all appearance came from one who by this time had placed himself at the vessel's helm. All that can be said of the music is, that it was suited to the words, and all that could be heard of the latter, was a portion of a verse, if verse it might be called, which had exercised the talents of some thoroughly nautical mind. As we depend, for the accuracy of the quotation, altogether on the fidelity of the journal of the midshipman already named, it is possible that some injustice may be done the writer, but, according to that document, he sang a strain of the coasting song, which we have prefixed to this chapter, as its motto.

The papers of the coaster did not give a more detailed description of her character and pursuits, than that which is contained in this verse. It is certain that the log-book of the

Coquette was far less explicit. The latter merely said, that "a coaster called the Stately Pine, John Turner, Master, bound from New York to the Province of North Carolina, was boarded at 1 o'clock in the morning, all well." But this description was not of a nature to satisfy the seamen of the cruiser. Those who had been actually engaged in the expedition were much too excited to see things in their true colours, and, coupled with the two previous escapes of the Water Witch, the event just related had no small share in confirming their former opinions concerning her character. The sailing-master was not now alone in believing that all pursuit of the brigantine was perfectly useless.

But these were conclusions that the people of the Coquette made at their leisure, rather than those which suggested themselves on the instant. The boats, led by the flashes of light, had joined each other, and were rowing fast towards the ship, before the pulses of the actors

beat with sufficient calmness to allow of serious reflection ; nor was it until the adventurers were below, and in their hammocks, that they found suitable occasion to relate what had occurred to a wondering auditory. Robert Yarn, the fore-topman who had felt the locks of the sea-green lady blowing in his face during the squall, took advantage of the circumstance to dilate on his experiences ; and after having advanced certain positions that particularly favoured his own theories, he produced one of the crew of the barge who stood ready to affirm, in any court in christendom, that he actually saw the process of changing the beautiful and graceful lines that distinguished the hull of the smuggler, into the coarser and more clumsy model of the coaster.

" There are know-nothings," continued Robert, after he had fortified his position by the testimony in question, " who would deny that the water of the ocean is blue, because the stream that turns the parish mill happens to

be muddy. But your real mariner, who has lived much in foreign parts, is a man who understands the philosophy of life, and knows when to believe a truth and when to scorn a lie. As for a vessel changing her character when hard pushed in a chase, there are many instances; though having one so near us, there is less necessity to be roving over distant seas in search of a case to prove it. My own opinion concerning this here brigantine, is much as follows;—that is to say, I do suppose there was once a real living hermaphrodite of her build and rig, and that she might be employed in some such trade as this craft is thought to be in, and that in some unlucky hour she and her people met with a mishap, that has condemned her ever since to appear on this coast at stated times. She has, however, a natural dislike to a royal cruiser, and no doubt the thing is now sailed by those who have little need of compass or observation. All this being true, it is not wonderful that when the boat's

crew got on her decks, they found her different from what they had expected. This much is certain, that when I lay within a boat-hook's length of her spritsail-yard-arm, she was a half-rig, with a woman figure-head, and as pretty a show of gear aloft as eye ever looked upon, while every thing below was as snug as a tobacco-box with the lid down, and here you all say that she is a high-deck'd schooner, with nothing ship-shape about her! What more is wanting to prove the truth of what has been stated?—If any man can gainsay it, let him speak."

As no man did gainsay it, it is presumed that the reasoning of the topman gained many proselytes. It is scarcely necessary to add how much of mystery and fearful interest was thrown around the redoubtable Skimmer of the Seas by the whole transaction.

There was a different feeling on the quarter-deck. The two lieutenants put their heads together and looked grave, while one or two

of the midshipmen who had been in the boats, were observed to whisper with their messmates, and to indulge in smothered laughter. As the captain, however, maintained his ordinary dignified and authoritative mien, the merriment went no farther, and was soon entirely repressed.

While on this subject, it may be proper to add, that in course of time the Stately Pine reached the capes of North Carolina in safety, and that having effected her passage over Edenton Bar without striking, she ascended the river to the point of her destination. Here the crew soon began to throw out hints relative to an encounter of their schooner with a French cruiser. As the British empire, even in its most remote corners, was at all times alive to its nautical glory, the event soon became the discourse in more distant parts of the colony, and in less than six months the London journals contained a very glowing account of an engagement, in which the names of the Stately Pine

and of John Turner made some respectable advances to immortality.

If Captain Ludlow ever gave any further account of the transaction than what was stated in the log-book of his ship, the bienséance observed by the lords of the admiralty prevented it from becoming public.

Returning from this digression, which has no other connection with the immediate thread of the narrative than that which arises from a reflected interest, we shall revert to the further proceedings on board the cruiser.

When the Coquette had hoisted in her boats, that portion of the crew which did not belong to the watch was dismissed to their hammocks, the lights were lowered, and tranquillity once more reigned in the ship. Ludlow sought his rest: and although there is reason to think that his slumbers were a littled disturbed by dreams, he remained tolerably quiet in the hammock-cloths, the place in which it has already been said he saw fit to take his repose, until the morning watch had been called.

Although the utmost vigilance was observed among the officers and look-outs during the rest of the night, there occurred nothing to arouse the crew from their usual recumbent attitudes between the guns. The wind continued light but steady, the sea smooth, and the heavens clouded, as during the first hours of darkness.

CHAPTER VII.

" The mouse ne'er shunned the cat, as they did budge
From rascals worse than they."

Coriolanus.

Day dawned on the Atlantic with its pearly light, succeeded by the usual flushing of the skies, and the stately rising of the sun from out the water. The instant the vigilant officer who commanded the morning watch caught the first glimpses of the returning brightness, Ludlow was awakened. A finger laid on his arm was sufficient to arouse one who slept with the responsibility of his station ever present to his

mind. A minute did not pass before the young man was on the quarter-deck, closely examining the heavens and the horizon. His first question was to ask if nothing had been seen during the watch. The answer was in the negative.

"I like this opening in the north-west," observed the Captain, after his eye had thoroughly scanned the whole of the still dusky and limited view; "wind will come out of it. Give us a cap-full, and we shall try the speed of this boasted Water Witch!—Do I not see a sail on our weather beam—or is it the crest of a wave?"

"The sea is getting irregular, and I have often been thus deceived since the light appeared."

"Get more sail on the ship. Here is wind in shore of us; we will be ready for it. See every thing clear to shew all our canvass."

The lieutenant received these orders with the customary deference, and communicated them to his inferiors again, with the promptitude that

distinguishes sea-discipline. The Coquette at the moment was lying under her three topsails, one of which was thrown against its mast in a manner to hold the vessel as nearly stationary as her drift and the wash of the waves would allow. So soon, however, as the officer of the watch summoned the people to exertion, the massive yards were swung, several light sails, that served to balance the fabric as well as to urge it ahead, were hoisted or opened, and the ship immediately began to move through the water. While the men of the watch were thus employed, the flapping of the canvass announced the approach of a new breeze.

The coast of North America is liable to sudden and dangerous transitions in the currents of the air. It is a circumstance of no unusual occurrence for a gale to alter its direction with so little warning, as greatly to jeopard the safety of a ship, or even to overwhelm her. It has been often said that the celebrated Ville de Paris was lost through one of these violent

changes, her captain having inadvertently hove-to the vessel under too much after sail, a mistake by which he lost the command of his ship during the pressing emergency that ensued. Whatever may have been the fact as regards that ill-fated prize, it is certain that Ludlow was perfectly aware of the hazards that sometimes accompany the first blasts of a north-west wind on his native coast, and that he never forgot to be prepared for the danger.

When the wind from the land struck the Coquette, the streak of light which announced the appearance of the sun, had been visible several minutes. As the broad sheets of vapour that had veiled the heavens during the prevalence of the south-easterly breeze were rolled up into dense masses of clouds, like some immense curtain that is withdrawn from before its scene, the water, no less than the sky, became instantly visible in every quarter. It is scarcely necessary to say how eagerly the gaze of our young seaman ran over the horizon, in order to ob-

serve the objects which might come within its range. At first, disappointment was plainly painted in his countenance, and then succeeded the animated eye and flushed cheek of success.

"I had thought her gone," he said, to his immediate subordinate in authority. "But here she is to leeward, just within the edge of that driving mist, and as dead under our lee as a kind fortune could place her. Keep the ship away, Sir, and cover her with canvass from her trucks down. Call the people from their hammocks, and shew yon insolent what her Majesty's sloop can do at need!"

This command was the commencement of a general and hasty movement, in which every seaman in the ship exerted his powers to the utmost. All hands were no sooner called than the depths of the vessel gave up their tenants, who, joining their force to that of the watch on deck, quickly covered the spars of the Coquette with a snow-white cloud. Not content to catch the breeze on such surfaces as the ordinary

yards could distend, long booms were thrust out over the water, and sail was set beyond sail, until the bending masts would bear no more. The low hull which supported this towering and complicated mass of ropes, spars, and sails, yielded to the powerful impulse, and the fabric which, in addition to its crowd of human beings, sustained so heavy a load of artillery, with all its burthen of stores and ammunition, began to divide the waves with the ready and imposing force of a vast momentum. The seas curled and broke against her sides, like water washing the rocks, the steady ship feeling, as yet, no impression from their feeble efforts. As the wind increased, however, and the vessel went further from the land, the surface of the ocean gradually grew more agitated, until the high-lands, which lay over the villa of the Lust in Rust, finally sunk into the sea, when the top-gallant-royals of the ship were seen describing wide segments of circles against the heavens, and her dark sides occasionally rose from a long and

deep roll, glittering with the element that sustained her.

When Ludlow first descried the object which he believed to be the chase, it seemed a motionless speck on the margin of the sea. It had now grown into all the magnitude and symmetry of the well-known brigantine. Her slight and attenuated spars were plainly to be seen, rolling, easily but wide, with the constant movement of the hull, and with no sail spread but that which was necessary to keep the vessel in command on the billows. But when the Coquette was just within the range of a cannon, the canvass began to unfold, and it was soon apparent that the Skimmer of the Seas was preparing for flight.

The first manœuvre of the Water Witch was an attempt to gain the wind of her pursuer. A short experiment appeared to satisfy those who governed the brigantine that the effort was vain while the wind was so fresh and the water so rough. She wore, and crowded sail on the opposite tack, in order to try her speed with the cruiser, nor was it until the result sufficiently

shewed the danger of permitting the other to get any nigher, that she finally put her helm a-weather, and ran off, like a sea-fowl resting on its wing, with the wind over her taffrail.

The two vessels now presented the spectacle of a stern chase. The brigantine also opened the folds of all her sails, and there arose a pyramid of canvass over the nearly imperceptible hull, that resembled a fantastic cloud driving above the sea, with a velocity that seemed to rival the passage of the vapour that floated in the upper air. As equal skill directed the movements of the two vessels, and the same breeze pressed upon their sails, it was long before there was any perceptible difference in their progress. Hour passed after hour, and were it not for the sheets of white foam that were dashed from the bows of the Coquette, and the manner in which she even outstripped the caps of the combing waves, her commander might have fancied his vessel ever in the same spot. While the ocean presented, on every side, the same monotonous and rolling picture, there lay the chase, seemingly neither a foot nearer nor

a foot farther than when the trial of speed began. A dark line would rise on the crest of a wave, and then sinking again, leave nothing visible but the yielding and waving cloud of canvass that danced along the sea.

"I had hoped for better things of the ship, Master Trysail!" said Ludlow, who had long been seated on a night-head, attentively watching the progress of the chase. "We are buried to the bob-stays, and yet, there yon fellow lies, nothing plainer than when he first showed his studding-sails!"

"And there he will lie, Captain Ludlow, while the light lasts. I have chased the rover, in the narrow seas, till the cliffs of England melted away like the cap of a wave, and we had raised the sand-banks of Holland high as the spirit-sail-yard, and yet what good came of it? The rogue played with us, as your sportsman trifles with the entangled trout, and when we thought we had him, he would shoot without the range of our guns with as little exertion as a ship slides into the water after the spur shoars are knocked from under her bows!"

"Ay, but the Druid had a little of the rust of antiquity about her. The Coquette has never got a chase under her lee that she did not speak."

"I disparage no ship, Sir, for character is character, and none should speak lightly of their fellow-creatures, and least of all, of any thing which follows the sea. I allow the Coquette to be a lively boat on a wind, and a real scudder going large; but one should know the wright that fashioned yonder brigantine, before he ventures to say that any vessel in her Majesty's fleet can hold way with her when she is driven hard."

"These opinions, Trysail, are fitter for the tales of a top, than for the mouth of one who walks the quarter-deck."

"I should have lived to little purpose, Captain Ludlow, not to know that what was philosophy in my young days is not philosophy now. They say the world is round, which is my own opinion—first, because the glorious Sir Francis Drake, and divers other Englishmen, have gone in, as it were, at one end, and out at the other, no less than several seamen of other

nations, to say nothing of one Magellan, who pretends to have been the first man to make the passage—which I take to be neither more nor less than a Portuguee lie, it being altogether unreasonable to suppose that a Portuguee should do what an Englishman had not yet thought of doing;—secondly, if the world were not round, or some such shape, why should we see the small sails of a ship before her courses, or why should her truck heave up into the horizon before the hull? They say, moreover, that the world turns round, which is no doubt true, and it is just as true that its opinions turn round with it, which brings me to the object of my remark;—yon fellow shows more of his broadside, Sir, than common! He is edging in for the land, which must lie hereaway, on our larboard beam, in order to get into smoother water. This tumbling about is not favourable to your light craft, let who will build them!"

"I had hoped to drive him off the coast! Could we get him fairly into the Gulf Stream he would be ours, for he is too low in the water to escape us in the short seas. We must

force him into blue water, though our upper spars crack in the struggle! Go aft, Mr. Hopper, and tell the officer of the watch to bring the ship's head up a point and a half to the northward, and to give a slight pull on the braces."

"What a mainsail the rogue carries! It is as broad as the instructions of a roving commission, with a hoist like the promotion of an admiral's son. How every thing pulls aboard him! A thorough-bred sails that brigantine, let him come whence he may!"

"I think we near him! The rough water is helping us, and we are closing. Steer small, fellow; steer small! You see the colour of his mouldings begins to shew when he lifts on the seas."

"The sun touches his side—and yet, Captain Ludlow, you may be right, for here is a man in his fore-top, plainly enough to be seen. A shot or two among his spars and sails might now do service."

Ludlow affected not to hear, but the first lieutenant having come on the forecastle, se-

conded this opinion, by remarking that their position would indeed enable them to use the chase gun without losing any distance. As Trysail sustained his former assertion by truths that were too obvious to be refuted, the commander of the cruiser reluctantly issued an order to clear away the forward gun, and to shift it into the bridle-port. The interested and attentive seamen were not long in performing this service, and a report was quickly made to the captain that the piece was ready.

Ludlow then descended from his post on the night-head, and pointed the cannon himself.

"Knock away the quoin entirely," he said to the captain of the gun, when he had got the range; "now mind her when she lifts, forward; keep the ship steady, Sir—fire!"

Those gentlemen "who live at home at ease," are often surprised to read of combats, in which so much powder, and hundreds and even thousands of shot are expended, with so little loss of human life, while a struggle on the land, of less duration, and seemingly of less obstinacy, shall sweep away a multitude. The secret of

the difference lies in the uncertainty of aim, on an element as restless as the sea. The largest ship is rarely quite motionless when on the open ocean, and it is not necessary to tell the reader, that the smallest variation in the direction of a gun at its muzzle, becomes magnified to many yards at the distance of a few hundred feet. Marine gunnery has no little resemblance to the skill of the fowler, since a calculation for a change in the position of the object must commonly be made in both cases, with the additional embarrassment on the part of the seaman, of an allowance for a complicated movement in the piece itself.

How far the gun of the Coquette was subject to the influence of these causes, or how far the desire of her captain to protect those whom he believed to be on board the brigantine, had an effect on the direction taken by its shot, will probably never be known. It is certain, however, that when the stream of fire, followed by its curling cloud, had gushed out upon the water, fifty eyes sought in vain to trace the course of the iron messenger among the sails

and rigging of the Water Witch. The symmetry of her beautiful rig was undisturbed, and the unconscious fabric still glided over the waves with its customary ease and velocity. Ludlow had a reputation among his crew for some skill in the direction of a gun. The failure therefore in no degree aided in changing the opinions of the common men concerning the character of the chase. Many shook their heads, and more than one veteran tar, as he paced his narrow limits, with both hands thrust into the bosom of his jacket, was heard to utter his belief of the inefficacy of ordinary shot in bringing-to that brigantine. It was necessary, however, to repeat the experiment, for the sake of appearances. The gun was several times discharged, and always with the same want of success.

"There is little use in wasting our powder at this distance, and with so heavy a sea," said Ludlow, quitting the cannon, after a fifth and fruitless essay. "I shall fire no more. Look at your sails, gentlemen, and see that every thing

draws. We must conquer with our heels, and let the artillery rest.—Secure the gun."

"The piece is ready, Sir," observed its captain, presuming on his known favour with the commander, though he qualified the boldness by taking off his hat in a sufficiently respectful manner—"'tis a pity to balk it!"

"Fire it yourself then, and return the piece to its port," carelessly returned the captain, willing to show that others could be as unlucky as himself.

The men quartered at the gun, left alone, busied themselves in executing the order.

"Run in the quoin, and, blast the brig, give her a point-blanker!" said the gruff old seaman, who was intrusted with a local authority over that particular piece. "None of your geometry calculations for me!"

The crew obeyed, and the match was instantly applied. A rising sea however aided the object of the directly-minded old tar, or our narration of the exploits of the piece would end with the discharge, since its shot

would otherwise have inevitably plunged into a wave within a few yards of its muzzle. The bows of the ship rose with the appearance of the smoke, the usual brief expectation followed, and then fragments of wood were seen flying above the top-mast-studding-sail-boom of the brigantine, which at the same time flew forward, carrying with it and entirely deranging the two important sails that depended on the spar for support.

"So much for plain sailing!" cried the delighted tar, slapping the breech of the gun affectionately. "Witch or no witch, there go two of her jackets at once, and, by the captain's good will, we shall shortly take off some more of her clothes. In sponge—"

"The order is to run the gun aft, and secure it," said a merry midshipman, leaping on the heel of the bowsprit, to gaze at the confusion on board the chase. "The rogue is nimble enough in saving his canvass!"

There was, in truth, necessity for exertion, on the part of those who governed the movements of the brigantine. The two sails that

were rendered temporarily useless, were of great importance with the wind over the taff-rail. The distance between the two vessels did not exceed a mile, and the danger of lessening it was now too obvious to admit of delay. The ordinary movements of seamen, in critical moments, are dictated by a quality that resembles instinct more than thought. The constant hazards of a dangerous and delicate profession, in which delay may prove fatal, and in which life, character, and property are so often dependent on the self-possession and resources of him who commands, beget, in time, so keen a knowledge of the necessary expedients, as to cause it to approach a natural quality.

The studding-sails of the Water Witch were no sooner fluttering in the air, than the brigantine slightly changed her course, like some bird whose wing has been touched by the fowler, and her head was seen inclining as much to the south, as the moment before it had pointed northward. The variation, trifling as it was, brought the wind on the opposite

quarter, and caused the boom that distended her mainsail to gybe. At the same instant, the studding-sails, which had been flapping under the lee of this vast sheet of canvass, swelled to their utmost tension, and the vessel lost little, if any, of the power which urged her through the water. Even while this evolution was so rapidly performed, men were seen aloft, nimbly employed, as it has been already expressed by the observant little midshipman, in securing the crippled sails.

"A rogue has a quick wit," said Trysail, whose critical eye suffered no movement of the chase to escape him, "and he has need of it, sail from what haven he may! Yon brigantine is prettily handled! Little have we gained by our fire, but the gunner's account of ammunition expended; and little has the free-trader lost, but a studding-sail-boom, which will work up very well yet, into top-gallant-yards, and other light spars for such a cockle-shell."

"It is something gained to force him off the land into rougher water," Ludlow mildly an-

swered. "I think we see his quarter pieces more plainly than before the gun was used."

"No doubt, Sir, no doubt. I got a glimpse of his lower dead-eyes a minute ago, but I have been near enough to see the saucy look of the hussy under his bowsprit—yet there goes the brigantine at large!"

"I am certain that we are closing," thoughtfully returned Ludlow. "Hand me a glass, quarter-master."

Trysail watched the countenance of his young commander, as he examined the chase with the aid of the instrument, and he thought he read strong discontent in his features when the other laid it aside.

"Does he shew no signs of coming back to his allegiance, Sir; or does the rogue hold out in obstinacy?"

"The figure on his poop is the bold man who ventured on board the Coquette, and who now seems quite as much at his ease as when he exhibited his effrontery here?"

"There is a look of deep water about that rogue, and I thought her Majesty had gained

a prize, when he first put foot on our decks. You are right enough, Sir, in calling him a bold one! The fellow's impudence would unsettle the discipline of a whole ship's company, though every other man were an officer, and all the rest priests. He took up as much room in walking the quarter-deck, as a ninety in waring, and the truck is not driven on the head of that top-gallant-mast half as hard as the hat is riveted to his head. The fellow has no reverence for a pennant! I managed, in shifting pennants at sunset, to make the fly of the one that came down flap in his impudent countenance, by way of hint, and he took it as a Dutchman minds a signal—that is, as a question to be answered in the next watch. A little polish got on the quarter-deck of a man-of-war, would make a philosopher of the rogue, and fit him for any company short of heaven!"

"There goes a new boom aloft!" cried Ludlow, interrupting the discursive discourse of the master. "He is bent on getting in with the shore."

"If these puffs come much heavier," returned the master, whose opinions of the chase vacillated with his professional feelings, "we shall have him at our own play, and try the qualities of his brigantine! The sea has a green spot to windward, and there are strong symptoms of a squall on the water. One can almost see into the upper world, with an air clear as this. Your northers sweep the mists off America, and leave both sea and land bright as a school-boy's face, before the tears have dimmed it after the first flogging. You have sailed in the southern seas, Captain Ludlow, I know, for we were shipmates among the islands, years that are past, but I never heard whether you have run the Gibraltar passage, and seen the blue water that lies among the Italy mountains?"

"I made a cruise against the Barbary states, when a lad, and we had business that took us to the northern shore."

"Ay! 'Tis your northern shore I mean! There is not a foot of it all, from the rock at the entrance, to the Fare of Messina, that eye of mine hath not seen. No want of look-outs,

and land-marks in that quarter! Here we are close aboard of America, which lies some eight or ten leagues there-away to the northward of us, and some forty astern, and yet, if it were not for our departure, with the colour of the water, and a knowledge of the soundings, one might believe himself in the middle of the Atlantic. Many a good ship plumps upon America before she knows where she is going, while in yon sea you may run for a mountain, with its side in full view, four and twenty hours on a stretch, before you see the town at its foot."

"Nature has compensated for the difference, in defending the approach to this coast by the Gulf Stream, with its floating weeds and different temperature, while the lead may feel its way in the darkest night, for no roof of a house is more gradual than the ascent of this shore from a hundred fathoms to a sandy beach."

"I said many a good ship, Captain Ludlow, and not good navigator. No, no: your thorough-bred knows the difference between green water and blue, as well as between a hand-lead and the deep sea. But I remember to have

missed an observation once when running for Genoa, before a mistrail. There was a likelihood of making our land-fall in the night, and the greater the need of knowing the ship's position. I have often thought, Sir, that the ocean was like human life, a blind track for all that is ahead, and none of the clearest as respects that which has been passed over. Many a man runs headlong to his own destruction, and many a ship steers for a reef, under a press of canvass. To-morrow is a fog into which none of us can see, and even the present time is little better than thick weather, into which we look without getting much information. Well, as I was observing, here lay our course, with the wind as near aft as need be, blowing much as at present, for your French mistrail has a family likeness to the American norther. We had the main-top-gallant-sail set, without studding sails, for we began to think of the deep bight in which Genoa is stowed, and the sun had dipped more than an hour. As our good fortune would have it, clouds and mistrails do not agree long, and we got a clear horizon. Here lay a moun-

tain of snow, northerly, a little west, and there lay another, southerly with easting. The best ship in Queen Anne's navy could not have fetched either in a day's run, and yet there we saw them, as plainly as if anchored under their lee! A look at the chart soon gave us an insight into our situation. The first were the Alps, as they call them, being, as I suppose, the French for apes, of which there are no doubt plenty in those regions, and the other were the high lands of Corsica, both being as white, in midsummer, as the hair of a man of fourscore. You see, Sir, we had only to set the two, by compass, to know within a league or two where we were. So we run till midnight, and hove-to; and in the morning we took the light to feel for our haven—"

"The brigantine is gybing again!" cried Ludlow. "He is determined to shoal his water."

The master glanced an eye around the horizon, and then pointed steadily towards the north. Ludlow observed the gesture, and, turning his head, he was at no loss to read its meaning.

CHAPTER VIII.

"I am gone, Sir,
And anon, Sir,
I'll be with you again."
Clown in "Twelfth Night."

ALTHOUGH it is contrary to the apparent evidence of our senses, there is no truth more certain, than that the course of most gales of wind comes from the leeward. The effects of a tempest shall be felt for hours at a point that is seemingly near its termination, before they are witnessed at another that appears to be nearer its source. Experience has also shewn that a storm is more destructive at or near its

place of actual commencement, than at that whence it may seem to come. The easterly gales that so often visit the coasts of the republic, commit their ravages in the bays of Pennsylvania and Virginia, or along the sounds of the Carolinas, hours before their existence is known in the states further east; and the same wind which is a tempest at Hatteras, becomes softened to a breeze near the Penobscot. There is, however, little mystery in this apparent phenomenon. The vacuum which has been created in the air, and which is the origin of all winds, must be filled first from the nearest stores of the atmosphere; and as each region contributes to produce the equilibrium, it must, in return, receive other supplies from those which lie beyond. Were a given quantity of water to be suddenly abstracted from the sea, the empty space would be replenished by a torrent from the nearest surrounding fluid, whose level would be restored in succession by supplies that were less and less violently contributed. Were the abstraction made on a shoal, or near the land, the flow would be

greatest from that quarter where the fluid had the greatest force, and with it would consequently come the current.

But while there is so close an affinity between the two fluids, the workings of the viewless winds are, in their nature, much less subject to the powers of human comprehension than those of the sister element. The latter are frequently subject to the direct and manifest influence of the former, while the effects produced by the ocean on the air, are hid from our knowledge by the subtle character of the agency. Vague and erratic currents, it is true, are met in the waters of the ocean, but their origin is easily referred to the action of the winds, while we often remain in uncertainty as to the immediate causes which give birth to the breezes themselves. Thus the mariner, even while the victim of the irresistible waves, studies the heavens as the known source from whence the danger comes; and while he struggles fearfully, amid the strife of the elements, to preserve the balance of the delicate and fearful machine he governs,

he well knows that the one which presents the most visible, and, to a landsman, much the most formidable object of apprehension, is but the instrument of the unseen and powerful agent that heaps the water on his path.

It is in consequence of this difference in power, and of the mystery that envelopes the workings of the atmosphere, that, in all ages, seamen have been the subjects of superstition in respect to the winds. There is always more or less of the dependency of ignorance in the manner with which they have regarded the changes of that fickle element. Even the mariners of our own times are not exempt from this weakness. The thoughtless ship-boy is reproved if his whistle be heard in the howling of the gale, and the officer sometimes betrays a feeling of uneasiness, if at such a moment he should witness any violation of the received opinions of his profession. He finds himself in the situation of one whose ears have drunk in legends of supernatural appearances, which a better instruction has taught him to condemn, and who, when placed in

situations to awaken their recollection, finds the necessity of drawing upon his reason, to quiet emotions that he might hesitate to acknowledge.

When Trysail directed the attention of his young commander to the heavens, however, it was more with the intelligence of an experienced mariner, than with any of the sensations to which allusion has just been made. A cloud had suddenly appeared on the water, and long ragged portions of the vapour were pointing from it, in a manner to give it what seamen term a windy appearance.

"We shall have more than we want, with this canvass!" said the master, after both he and his commander had studied the appearance of the mist for a sufficient time. "That fellow is a mortal enemy of lofty sails; he likes to see nothing but naked sticks up, in his neighbourhood!"

"I should think his appearance will force the brigantine to shorten sail," returned the Captain. "We will hold on to the last, while he must begin to take in soon, or the squall

will come upon him too fast for a light-handed vessel."

"'Tis a cruiser's advantage! And yet the rogue shows no signs of lowering a single cloth!"

"We will look to our own spars," said Ludlow, turning to the lieutenant of the watch. "Call the people up, Sir, and see all ready for yonder cloud."

The order was succeeded by the customary hoarse summons of the boatswain, who prefaced the effort of his lungs by a long shrill winding of his call above the hatchways of the ship. The cry of "All hands shorten sail, ahoy!" soon brought the crew from the depths of the vessel to the upper deck. Each trained seaman silently took his station, and after the ropes were cleared, and the few necessary preparations made, all stood, in attentive silence, awaiting the sounds that might next proceed from the trumpet, which the first lieutenant had now assumed in person.

The superiority of sailing which a ship fitted for war possesses over one employed in

commerce, proceeds from a variety of causes. The first is in the construction of the hull, which in the one is as justly fitted as the art of naval architecture will allow, to the double purposes of speed and buoyancy; while in the other, the desire of gain induces great sacrifices of these important objects, in order that the vessel may be burthensome. Next comes the difference in the rig, which is not only more square, but more lofty, in a ship of war than in a trader, because the greater force of the crew of the former enables them to manage both spars and sails, that are far heavier than any ever used in the latter. Then comes the greater ability of the cruiser to make and shorten sail, since a ship manned by one or two hundred men may safely profit by the breeze to the last moment, while one manned by a dozen, often loses hours of a favourable wind, from the weakness of her crew. This explanation will enable the otherwise uninitiated reader to understand the reason why Ludlow had hoped the coming squall would aid his designs on the chase.

To express ourselves in nautical language, "the Coquette held on to the last." Ragged streaks of vapour were whirling about in the air, within a fearful proximity to the lofty and light sails, and the foam on the water had got so near the ship, as already to efface her wake, when Ludlow, who had watched the progress of the cloud with singular coolness, made a sign to his subordinate that the proper instant had arrived.

"In, of all!" shouted through the trumpet, was the only command necessary, for officers and crew were well instructed in their duty.

The words had no sooner quitted the lips of the lieutenant, than the steady roar of the sea was drowned in the flapping of canvass. Tacks, sheets, and haulyards went together, and, in less than a minute, the cruiser showed naked spars and whistling ropes, where so lately had been seen a cloud of snow-white cloth. All her steering-sails came in together, and the lofty canvass was furled to her top-sails. The latter still stood, and the vessel received the weight of the little tempest on their broad surfaces. The

gallant ship stood the shock nobly, but, as the wind came over the taffrail, its force had far less influence on the hull, than on the other occasion already described. The danger, now, was only for her spars, and these were saved by the watchful, though bold, vigilance of her captain.

Ludlow was no sooner certain that the cruiser felt the force of the wind—and to gain this assurance needed but a few moments—than he turned his eager look on the brigantine. To the surprise of all who witnessed her temerity, the Water Witch still shewed all her light sails. Swiftly as the ship was now driven through the water, its velocity was greatly outstripped by that of the wind. The signs of the passing squall were already visible on the sea for half the distance between the two vessels, and still the chase showed no consciousness of its approach. Her commander had evidently studied its effects on the Coquette, and he awaited the shock with the coolness of one accustomed to depend on his own resources, and able to estimate the force with which he had to contend.

"If he hold on a minute longer, he will get more than he can bear, and away will go all his kites, like smoke from the muzzle of a gun!" muttered Trysail. "Ah! there come down his studding sails—ha! settle away the main-sail—in royal and top-gallant sail, with top-sail on the cap!—The rascals are nimble as pick-pockets in a crowd!"

The honest master has sufficiently described the precautions taken on board of the brigantine. Nothing was furled, but as every thing was hauled up, or lowered, the squall had little to waste its fury on. The diminished surfaces of the sails protected the spars, while the canvass was saved by the aid of cordage. After a few moments of pause, half-a-dozen men were seen busied in more effectually securing the few upper and lighter sails.

But though the boldness with which the Skimmer of the Seas carried sail to the last, was justified by the result, still the effects of the increased wind and rising waves, on the progress of the two vessels, grew more sensible. While the little and low brigantine began to

labour and roll, the Coquette rode the element with buoyancy, and consequently with less resistance from the water. Twenty minutes, during which the force of the wind was but little lessened, brought the cruiser so near the chase, as to enable her crew to distinguish most of the smaller objects that were visible above her ridge-ropes.

"'Blow winds and crack your cheeks!'" said Ludlow, in an under tone, the excitement of the chase growing with the hopes of success. "I ask but one half hour, and then shift at your pleasure!"

"Blow, good devil, and you shall have the cook!" muttered Trysail, quoting a very different author. "Another glass will bring us within hail."

"The squall is leaving us!" interrupted the captain. "Pack on the ship again, Mr. Luff, from her trucks to her ridge-ropes!"

The whistle of the boatswain was again heard at the hatchways, and the hoarse summons of "All hands make sail, ahoy!" once more called the people to their stations. The sails were

set with a rapidity which nearly equalled the speed with which they had been taken in; and the violence of the breeze was scarcely off the ship, before its complicated volumes of canvass were spread to catch what remained. On the other hand, the chase, even more hardy than the cruiser, did not wait for the end of the squall, but profiting by the notice given by the latter, the Skimmer of the Seas began to sway his yards aloft, while the sea was still white with foam.

"The quick-sighted rogue knows we are done with it," said Trysail, "and he is getting ready for his own turn. We gain but little of him, notwithstanding our muster of hands."

The fact was too true to be denied, for the brigantine was again under all her canvass, before the ship had sensibly profited by her superior physical force. It was at this moment when, perhaps in consequence of the swell on the water, the Coquette might have possessed some small advantage, that the wind suddenly failed. The squall had been its expiring effort, and within an hour after the two vessels had

again made sail, the canvass was flapping against the masts, in a manner to throw back in eddies a force as great as that it received. The sea fell fast, and ere the end of the last or forenoon watch, the surface of the ocean was agitated only by those long undulating swells that seldom leave it entirely without motion. For some little time there were fickle currents of air playing in various directions about the ship, but always in sufficient force to urge her slowly through the water, and then, when the equilibrium of the element seemed established, there was a total calm. During the half hour of the baffling winds, the brigantine had been a gainer, though not enough to carry her entirely beyond the reach of the cruiser's guns.

"Haul up the courses," said Ludlow, when the last breath of wind had been felt on the ship, and quitting the gun where he had long stood watching the movements of the chase. "Get the boats into the water, Mr. Luff, and arm their crews."

The young commander issued this order, which needed no interpreter to explain its ob-

ject, firmly, but in sadness. His face was thoughtful, and his whole air was that of a man who yielded to an imperative but an unpleasant duty. When he had spoken, he signed to the attentive Alderman and his friend to follow, and enter his cabin.

"There is no alternative," continued Ludlow, as he laid the glass, which so often that morning had been at his eye, on the table, and threw himself into a chair. "This rover must be seized at every hazard, and here is a favourable occasion to carry him by boarding. Twenty minutes will bring us to his side, and five more will put us in possession; but—"

"You think the Skimmer is not a man to receive such visitors with an old woman's welcome?" pithily observed Myndert.

"I much mistake the man if he yield so beautiful a vessel peacefully. Duty is imperative on a seaman, Alderman Van Beverout, and much as I lament the circumstance, it must be obeyed."

"I understand you, Sir. Captain Ludlow has two mistresses, — Queen Anne and the daugh-

ter of old Etienne de Barbérie. He fears both. When the debts exceed the means of payment, it would seem wise to offer to compound, and, in this case, her Majesty and my niece may be said to stand in the case of creditors."

"You mistake my meaning, Sir," said Ludlow, proudly. "There can be no composition between a faithful officer and his duty, nor do I acknowledge more than one mistress in my ship; but seamen are little to be trusted in the moment of success, and with their passions awakened by resistance. Alderman Van Beverout, will you accompany the party, and serve as mediator?"

"Pikes and hand-grenades! am I a fit subject for mounting the sides of a smuggler, with a broadsword between my teeth? If you will put me into the smallest and most peaceable of your boats, with a crew of two boys, that I can control with the authority of a magistrate, and covenant to remain here with your three topsails aback, having always a flag of truce at each mast, I will bear the olive branch to the brigantine, but not a word of menace. If report speaks

true, your Skimmer of the Seas is no lover of threats, and Heaven forbid that I should do violence to any man's habits! I will go forth as your turtle-dove, Captain Ludlow, but not one foot will I proceed as your Goliath."

"And you equally refuse endeavouring to avert hostilities?" continued Ludlow, turning his look on the Patroon of Kinderhook.

"I am the Queen's subject, and ready to aid in supporting the laws," quietly returned Oloff Van Staats.

"Patroon!" exclaimed his watchful friend, "you know not what you say. If there were question of an inroad of Mohawks, or an invasion from the Canadas, the case would differ; but this is only a trifling difference concerning a small balance in the revenue duties, which had better be left to your tide-waiter, and the other wild-cats of the law. If parliament will put temptation before our eyes, let the sin light on their own heads. Human nature is weak, and the vanities of our system are so many inducements to overlook unreasonable regulations. I say, therefore, it is better to remain in peace

on board this ship, where our characters will be as safe as our bones, and trust to Providence for what will happen."

"I am the Queen's subject, and ready to uphold her dignity," repeated Oloff, firmly.

"I will trust you, Sir," said Ludlow, taking his rival by the arm, and leading him into his own state-room.

The conference was soon ended, and a midshipman shortly after reported that the boats were ready for service. The master was next summoned to the cabin, and admitted to the private apartment of his commander. Ludlow then proceeded to the deck, where he made the final dispositions for the attack. The ship was left in charge of Mr. Luff, with an injunction to profit by any breeze that might offer, to draw as near as possible to the chase. Trysail was placed in the launch, at the head of a strong party of boarders. Van Staats of Kinderhook was provided with the yawl, manned only by its customary crew, while Ludlow entered his own barge, which contained its usual complement, though the arms that lay in the stern-

sheets sufficiently showed that they were prepared for service.

The launch being the soonest ready, and of much the heaviest movement, was the first to quit the side of the Coquette. The master steered directly for the becalmed and motionless brigantine. Ludlow took a more circuitous course, apparently with an intention of causing such a diversion as might distract the attention of the crew of the smuggler, and with the view of reaching the point of attack at the same moment with the boat that contained his principal force. The yawl also inclined from the straight line, steering as much on one side as the barge diverged on the other. In this manner the men pulled in silence for some twenty minutes, the motion of the larger boat, which was heavily charged, being slow and difficult. At the end of this period a signal was made from the barge, when all the men ceased rowing, and prepared themselves for the struggle. The launch was within pistol-shot of the brigantine, and directly on her beam, the yawl had gained her head, where

Van Staats of Kinderhook was studying the malign expression of the image, with an interest that seemed to increase as his sluggish nature became excited, and Ludlow, on the quarter opposite to the launch, was examining the condition of the chase by the aid of a glass. Trysail profited by the pause, to address his followers.

"This is an expedition in boats," commenced the accurate and circumstantial master, "made in smooth water, with little, or, one may say, no wind, in the month of June, and on the coast of North America. You are not such a set of know-nothings, men, as to suppose the launch has been hoisted out, and two of the oldest, not to say best seamen, on the quarter-deck of her Majesty's ship, have gone in boats, without the intention of doing something more than to ask the name and character of the brig in sight. The smallest of the young gentlemen might have done that duty as well as the Captain or myself. It is the belief of those who are best informed, that the stranger who has the impudence to lie quietly within

long range of a royal cruiser, without showing his colours, is neither more nor less than the famous Skimmer of the Seas; a man against whose seamanship I will say nothing, but who has none of the best reputation for honesty, as relates to the Queen's revenue. No doubt you have heard many extraordinary accounts of the exploits of this rover, some of which seem to insinuate that the fellow has a private understanding with those who manage their transactions in a less religious manner than it may be supposed is done by the bench of bishops. But what of that? You are hearty Englishmen, who know what belongs to church and state, and d—e, you are not the boys to be frightened by a little witchcraft. (A cheer.) Ay, that is intelligible and reasonable language, and such as satisfies me you understand the subject. I shall say no more, than just to add, that Captain Ludlow desires there may be no indecent language, nor, for that matter, any rough treatment of the people of the brigantine, over and above the knocking on the head and cutting of throats that may be necessary to

take her. In this particular, you will take example by me, who, being older, have more experience than most of you, and who, in all reason, should better know when and where to shew his manhood. Lay about you like men, so long as the free-traders stand to their quarters—but remember mercy in the hour of victory! You will on no account enter the cabins—on this head my orders are explicit; and I shall make no more of throwing the man into the sea, who dares to transgress them, than if he were a dead Frenchman; and as we now clearly understand each other, and know our duty so well, there remains no more than to do it. I have said nothing of the prize-money (a cheer), seeing you are men that love the Queen and her honour more than lucre (a cheer); but this much I can safely promise, that there will be the usual division (a cheer): and as there is little doubt but the rogues have driven a profitable trade, why the sum total is likely to be no trifle." (Three hearty cheers.)

The report of a pistol from the barge, which was immediately followed by a gun from the

cruiser, whose shot came whistling between the masts of the Water Witch, was the signal to resort to the ordinary means of victory. The master cheered in his turn, and in a full, steady, and deep voice, he gave the order to "pull away." At the same instant, the barge and yawl were seen advancing towards the object of their common attack, with a velocity that promised to bring the event to a speedy issue.

Throughout the whole of the preparations in and about the Coquette, since the moment when the breeze failed, nothing had been seen of the crew of the brigantine. The beautiful fabric lay rolling on the heaving and setting waters, but no human form appeared to control her movements, or to make the arrangements that seemed so necessary for her defence. The sails continued hanging as they had been left by the breeze, and the hull was floating at the will of the waves. This deep quiet was undisturbed by the approach of the boats, and if the desperate individual who was known to command the free-trader had any intentions

of resistance, they had been entirely hid from the long and anxious gaze of Ludlow. Even the shouts, and the dashing of the oars on the water, when the boats commenced their final advance, produced no change on the decks of the chase, though the commander of the Coquette saw her head-yards slowly and steadily changing their direction. Uncertain of the object of this movement, he rose on the seat of his boat, and waving his hat, cheered the men to greater exertion. The barge had got within a hundred feet of the broadside of the brigantine, when the whole of her wide folds of canvass were seen swelling outwards. The exquisitely ordered machinery of spars, sails, and rigging bowed towards the barge, as in the act of a graceful leave-taking, and then the light hull glided ahead, leaving the boat to plough through the empty space which it had just occupied. There needed no second look to assure Ludlow of the inefficacy of further pursuit, since the sea was already ruffled by the breeze which had so opportunely come to aid the smuggler. He signed to Trysail to

desist, and both stood looking, with disappointed eyes, at the white and bubbling streak which was left by the wake of the fugitive.

But while the Water Witch left the boats commanded by the captain and master of the Queen's cruiser behind her, she steered directly on the course that was necessary to bring her soonest in contact with the yawl. For a few moments, the crew of the latter believed it was their own advance that brought them so rapidly near their object, and when the midshipman who steered the boat discovered his error, it was only in season to prevent the swift brigantine from passing over his little bark. He gave the yawl a wide sheer, and called to his men to pull for their lives. Oloff Van Staats had placed himself at the head of the boat, armed with a hanger, and with every faculty too intent on the expected attack, to heed a danger that was scarcely intelligible to one of his habits. As the brigantine glided past, he saw her low channels bending towards the water, and with a powerful effort, he leaped into them, shouting a sort of war cry in Dutch.

At the next instant, he threw his large frame over the bulwarks and disappeared on the deck of the smuggler.

When Ludlow had caused his boats to assemble on the spot which the chase had so lately occupied, he saw that the fruitless expedition had been attended by no other casualty than the involuntary abduction of the Patroon of Kinderhook.

CHAPTER IX.

"What country, friends, is this?
——— Illyria, lady."

What you will.

MEN are as much indebted to a fortuitous concurrence of circumstances for the characters they sustain in this world, as to their personal qualities. The same truth is applicable to the reputations of ships. The properties of a vessel, like those of an individual, may have their influence on her good or evil fortune, still something is due to the accidents of life, in both. Although the breeze which came so opportunely to the aid of the Water Witch

soon filled the sails of the Coquette, it caused no change in the opinions of her crew concerning the fortunes of that ship, while it served to heighten the reputation which the Skimmer of the Seas had already obtained, as a mariner who was more than favoured by happy chances, in the thousand emergencies of his hazardous profession. Trysail himself shook his head, in a manner that expressed volumes, when Ludlow vented his humour on what the young man termed the luck of the smuggler; and the crews of the boats gazed after the retiring brigantine, as the inhabitants of Japan would now most probably regard the passage of some vessel propelled by steam. As Mr. Luff was not neglectful of his duty, it was not long before the Coquette approached her boats. The delay occasioned by hoisting in the latter, enabled the chase to increase the space between the two vessels, to such a distance as to place her altogether beyond the reach of shot. Ludlow, however, gave his orders to pursue the moment the ship was

ready, and he hastened to conceal his disappointment in his own cabin.

" Luck is a merchant's surplus, while a living profit is the reward of his wits!" observed Alderman Van Beverout, who could scarce conceal the satisfaction he felt at the unexpected and repeated escapes of the brigantine. " Many a man gains doubloons, when he only looked for dollars, and many a market falls, while the goods are in the course of clearance. There are Frenchmen enough, Captain Ludlow, to keep a brave officer in good humour, and the less reason to fret about a trifling mischance in overhauling a smuggler."

" I know not how highly you may prize your niece, Mr. Van Beverout, but were I the uncle of such a woman, the idea that she had become the infatuated victim of the arts of yon reckless villain would madden me!"

" Paroxysms and straight-jackets! happily you are not her uncle, Captain Ludlow, and therefore the less reason to be uneasy. The girl has a French fancy, and she is rummaging the smuggler's silks and laces; when her choice is

made we shall have her back again, more beautiful than ever for a little finery."

"Choice! Oh, Alida, Alida! this is not the election that we had reason to expect from thy cultivated mind, and proud sentiments!"

"The cultivation is my work, and the pride is an inheritance from old Etienne de Barbérie," drily rejoined Myndert. "But complaints never lowered a market, nor raised the funds. Let us send for the Patroon, and take counsel coolly as to the easiest manner of finding our way back to the Lust in Rust, before her Majesty's ship gets too far from the coast of America."

"Thy pleasantry is unseasonable, Sir. Your Patroon is gone with your niece, and a pleasant passage they are likely to enjoy in such company! We lost him in the expedition with our boats."

The Alderman stood aghast.

"Lost! Oloff Van Staats lost in the expedition of the boats! Evil betide the day when that discreet and affluent youth should be lost to the colony! Sir, you know not what

you utter, when you hazard so rash an opinion. The death of the young Patroon of Kinderhook would render one of the best and most substantial of our families extinct, and leave the third best estate in the province without a direct heir!"

"The calamity is not so overwhelming," returned the Captain with bitterness. "The gentleman has boarded the smuggler, and gone, with la Belle Barbérie, to examine his silks and laces!"

Ludlow then explained the manner in which the Patroon had disappeared. When perfectly assured that no bodily harm had befallen his friend, the satisfaction of the Alderman was quite as vivid as his consternation had been apparent but the moment before.

"Gone with la Belle Barbérie, to examine silks and laces!" he repeated, rubbing his hands together in delight. "Ay, there the blood of my old friend Stephanus begins to shew itself! Your true Hollander is no mercurial Frenchman, to beat his head and make grimaces at a shift in the wind, or a woman's frown; nor

a blustering Englishman (you are of the colony yourself, young gentleman) to swear a big oath and swagger; but as you see, a quiet, persevering, and in the main, an active son of old Batavia, who watches his opportunity, and goes into the very presence of—"

"Whom?"—demanded Ludlow, perceiving that the Alderman had paused.

"Of his enemy, seeing that all the enemies of the Queen are necessarily the enemies of every loyal subject. Bravo, young Oloff! thou art a lad after my own heart, and no doubt, no doubt, fortune will favour the brave! Had a Hollander a proper footing on this earth, Captain Cornelius Ludlow, we should hear a different tale concerning the right to the Narrow Seas, and indeed to most other questions of commerce."

Ludlow arose with a bitter smile on his face, though with no ill-feeling towards the man whose exultation was so natural.

"Mr. Van Staats may have reason to congratulate himself on his good fortune," he said, "though I much mistake if even his enterprise

will succeed against the wiles of one so artful, and of an appearance so gay, as the man whose guest he has now become. Let the caprice of others be what it may, Alderman Van Beverout, my duty must be done. The smuggler, aided by chance and artifice, has thrice escaped me; the fourth time it may be our fortune. If this ship possess the power to destroy the lawless rover, let him look to his fate!"

With this menace on his lips, Ludlow quitted the cabin, and went to resume his station on deck, and to renew his unwearied watching of the movements of the chase.

The change in the wind was altogether in favour of the brigantine. It brought her to windward, and was the means of placing the two vessels in positions that enabled the Water Witch to profit the most by her peculiar construction. Consequently, when Ludlow reached his post, he saw that the swift and light craft had trimmed every thing close upon the wind, and that she was already so far ahead, as to render the chances of bringing her again within range of his guns almost desperate, unless

indeed some of the many vicissitudes so common on the ocean should interfere in his behalf. There remained little else to be done, therefore, but to crowd every sail on the Coquette that the ship would bear, and to endeavour to keep within sight of the chase during the hours of darkness which must so shortly succeed. But before the sun had fallen to the level of the water, the hull of the Water Witch had disappeared, and when the day closed, no part of her airy outline was visible but that which was known to belong to her upper and lighter spars. In a few minutes afterwards, darkness covered the ocean, and the seamen of the royal cruiser were left to pursue their object at random.

How far the Coquette had run during the night does not appear, but when her commander made his appearance on the following morning, his long and anxious gaze met no other reward than a naked horizon. On every side the sea presented the same waste of water. No object was visible, but the sea-fowl wheeling on his wide wing, and the summits of the irregular

and green billows. Throughout that and many succeeding days, the cruiser continued to plough the ocean, sometimes running large, with every thing opened to the breeze that the wide booms would spread, and, at others, pitching and labouring with adverse winds, as if bent on prevailing over the obstacles which even nature presented to her progress. The head of the worthy Alderman had got completely turned, and though he patiently awaited the result, before the week was ended he knew not even the direction on which the ship was steering. At length he had reason to believe that the end of their cruise approached. The efforts of the seamen were observed to relax, and the ship was permitted to pursue her course under easier sail.

It was past meridian, on one of those days of moderate exertion, that François was seen stealing from below, and staggering from gun to gun, to a place in the centre of the ship, where he habitually took the air in good weather, and where he might dispose of his person, equally without presuming too far on the good-nature

of his superiors, and without courting too much intimacy with the coarser herd who composed the common crew.

"Ah!" exclaimed the valet, addressing his remark to the midshipman who has already been mentioned by the name of Hopper—"Voilà la terre! Quel bonheur! I shall be so happy—le bâtiment be trop agréable, mais vous savez, Monsieur Aspirant, que je ne suis point marin—What be le nom du pays?"

"They call it France," returned the boy, who understood enough of the other's language to comprehend his meaning; "and a very good country it is—for those that like it."

"Ma foi, non!"—exclaimed François, recoiling a pace, between amazement and delight.

"Call it Holland then, if you prefer that country most."

"Dites-moi, Monsieur Hoppair," continued the valet, laying a trembling finger on the arm of the remorseless young rogue; "est-ce la France?"

"One would think a man of your observation could tell that for himself. Do you not see the

church tower, with a château in the back-ground, and a village built in a heap by its side? Now look into yon wood! There is a walk, straight as a ship's wake in smooth water, and one—two —three—ay, eleven statues, with just one nose among them all!"

"Ma foi—dere is not no wood, and no château, and no village, and no statue, and no no nose,—mais Monsieur, je suis âgé—est-ce la France?"

"Oh, you miss nothing by having an indifferent sight, for I shall explain it all, as we go along. You see yonder hill-side, looking like a pattern card, of green and yellow stripes, or a signal book, with the flags of all nations, placed side by side—well, that is—les champs; and this beautiful wood, with all the branches trimmed, till it looks like so many raw marines at drill, is—la forêt."

The credulity of the warm-hearted valet could swallow no more, but assuming a look of commiseration and dignity, he drew back, and left the young tyro of the sea to enjoy his

joke with a companion who just then joined him.

In the mean time the Coquette continued to advance. The château, and churches, and villages of the midshipman, soon changed into a low sandy beach, with a back-ground of stunted pines, relieved here and there, by an opening, in which appeared the comfortable habitation and numerous outbuildings of some substantial yeoman, or occasionally embellished by the residence of a country proprietor. Towards noon, the crest of a hill rose from the sea, and, just as the sun set behind the barrier of mountain, the ship passed the sandy cape, and anchored at the spot that she had quitted when first joined by her commander after his visit to the brigantine. The vessel was soon moored, the light yards were struck, and a boat was lowered into the water. Ludlow and the Alderman then descended the side, and proceeded towards the mouth of the Shrewsbury. Although it was nearly dark before they had reached the shore, there remained light enough

to enable the former to discover an object of unusual appearance floating in the bay, and at no great distance from the direction of his barge. He was led by curiosity to steer for it.

"Cruisers and Water Witches!" muttered Myndert, when they were near enough to perceive the nature of the floating object. "That brazen hussy haunts us as if we had robbed her of gold! Let us set foot on land, and nothing short of a deputation from the city council, shall ever tempt me to wander from my own abode again!"

Ludlow shifted the helm of the boat, and resumed the course towards the river. He required no explanation to tell him more of the nature of the artifice by which he had been duped. The nicely balanced tub, the upright spar, and the extinguished lantern, with the features of the female of the malign smile traced on its horn faces, reminded him at once of the false light by which the Coquette had been lured from her course on the night she sailed in pursuit of the brigantine.

CHAPTER X.

"His daughter, and the heir of his kingdom,
—— hath referred herself
Unto a poor but worthy gentleman."

Cymbeline.

When Alderman Van Beverout and Ludlow drew near to the Lust in Rust, it was already dark. Night had overtaken them at some distance from the place of landing, and the mountain already threw its shadow across the river, the narrow strip of land that separated it from the sea, and far upon the ocean itself. Neither had an opportunity of making his observations on the condition of things in and about the villa, until they had ascended nearly to its level,

and had even entered the narrow but fragrant lawn in its front. Just before they arrived at the gate which opened on the latter, the Alderman paused, and addressed his companion with more of the manner of their ancient confidence, than he had manifested during the few preceding days of their intercourse.

"You must have observed that the events of this little excursion on the water have been rather of a domestic than of a public character," he said. "Thy father was a very ancient and much esteemed friend of mine, and I am far from certain that there is not some affinity between us in the way of intermarriages. Thy worthy mother, who was a thrifty woman, and a small talker, had some of the blood of my own stock. It would grieve me to see the good understanding which these recollections have created in any manner interrupted. I admit, Sir, that revenue is to the state what the soul is to the body,—the moving and governing principle; and that as the last would be a tenantless house without its inhabitant, so the first would be an exacting

and troublesome master, without its proper products. But there is no need of pushing a principle to extremities! If this brigantine be as you appear to suspect—and indeed as we have some reason from various causes to infer—the vessel called the Water Witch, she might have been a legal prize had she fallen into your power; but now that she has escaped, I cannot say what may be your intentions, but were thy excellent father, the worthy member of the King's Council, living, so discreet a man would think much before he opened his lips to say more than is discreet on this or any other subject."

"Whatever course I may believe my duty dictates, you may safely rely on my discretion concerning the—the remarkable—the very decided step which your niece has seen proper to take," returned the young man, who did not make this allusion to Alida without betraying, by the tremor of his voice, how great was her influence still over him. "I see no necessity of violating the domestic feelings to which you allude, by aiding to feed the ears

of the idly curious with the narrative of her errors."

Ludlow stopped suddenly, leaving the uncle to infer what he would wish to add.

"This is generous and manly, and like a loyal lover, Captain Ludlow," returned the Alderman, "though it is not exactly what I intended to suggest. We will not, however, multiply words in the night-air—ha! when the cat is asleep the mice are seen to play! Those night-riding, horse-racing blacks have taken possession of Alida's pavilion, and we may be thankful the poor girl's rooms are not as large as Harlaem Common, or we should hear the feet of some hard-driven beast galloping about in them."

The Alderman, in his turn, cut short his speech, and started as if one of the spukes of the colony had suddenly presented itself to his eyes. His language had drawn the look of his companion towards la Cour des Fées, and Ludlow had, at the same moment as the uncle, caught an unequivocal view of la Belle Barbérie, as she moved before the open window

of her apartment. The latter was about to rush forward, but the hand of Myndert arrested the impetuous movement.

"Here is more matter for our wits than our legs," observed the cool and prudent burgher. "That was the form of my ward and niece, or the daughter of old Etienne Barbérie has a double! Francis, didst thou not see the image of a woman at the window of the pavilion, or are we deceived by our wishes? I have sometimes been deluded in an unaccountable manner, Captain Ludlow, when my mind has been thoroughly set on the bargain, in the quality of the goods, for the most liberal of us all, are subject to mental weaknesses of this nature when hope is alive."

"Certainement, oui!" exclaimed the eager valet. "Quel malheur to be obligé to go on la mer, when Mam'selle Alide nevair quit la maison! J'étais sûr, que nous nous trompions, car jamais la famille de Barbérie love to be marins!"

"Enough, good Francis; the family Barbérie is as earthy as a fox. Go and notify the idle

rogues in my kitchen that their master is at hand, and remember that there is no necessity of speaking of all the wonders we have seen on the great deep. Captain Ludlow, we will now join my dutiful niece with as little fracas as possible."

Ludlow eagerly accepted the invitation, and instantly followed the dogmatical and seemingly unmoved Alderman, towards the dwelling. As the lawn was crossed they involuntarily paused a moment to look in at the open windows of the pavilion.

La Belle Barbérie had ornamented la Cour des Fées with a portion of that national taste which she inherited from her father. The heavy magnificence that distinguished the reign of Louis XIV., had scarcely descended to one of the middling rank of Monsieur de Barbérie, who had consequently brought with him, to the place of his exile, merely those tasteful usages which appear almost exclusively the property of the people from whom he had sprung, without the encumbrance and cost of the more pretending fashions of the period.

These usages had become blended with the more domestic and comfortable habits of English, or what is nearly the same thing, of American life, an union which, when it is found, perhaps produces the most just and happy medium of the useful and the agreeable. Alida was seated by a small table of mahogany, deeply absorbed in the contents of a little volume that lay before her. By her side stood a tea-service, the cups and the vessels of which were of the diminutive size then used, though exquisitively wrought and of the most beautiful material. Her dress was a negligée suited to her years, and her whole figure breathed that air of comfort, mingled with grace, which seems to be the proper quality of the sex, and which renders the privacy of an elegant woman so attractive and peculiar. Her mind was intent on the book, and the little silver urn hissed at her elbow apparently unheeded.

"This is the picture I have loved to draw," half whispered Ludlow, "when gales and storms have kept me on the deck throughout many a dreary and tempestuous night! When body

and mind have been impatient of fatigue, this is the repose I have most coveted, and for which I have even dared to hope!"

"The China trade will come to something in time, and you are an excellent judge of comfort, Master Ludlow," returned the Alderman. "That girl now has a warm glow on her cheek, which would seem to swear she never faced a breeze in her life, and it is not easy to fancy that one who looks so comfortable has lately been frolicing among the dolphins. Let us enter."

Alderman Van Beverout was not accustomed to use much ceremony in his visits to his niece. Without appearing to think any announcement necessary, therefore, the dogmatical burgher coolly opened a door and ushered his companion into the pavilion.

If the meeting between la Belle Alida and her guests was distinguished by the affected indifference of the latter, their seeming ease was quite equalled by that of the lady. She laid aside her book, with a calmness that might have been expected had they parted but an hour

before, and which sufficiently assured both Ludlow and her uncle that their return was known, and their presence expected. She simply arose at their entrance, and with a smile that betokened breeding, rather than feeling, she requested them to be seated. The composure of his niece had the effect to throw the Alderman into a brown study, while the young sailor scarcely knew which to admire the most, the exceeding loveliness of a woman who was always so beautiful, or her admirable self-possession in a scene that most others would have found sufficiently embarrassing. Alida herself appeared to feel no necessity for any explanation, for when her guests were seated, she took occasion to say, while busied in pouring out the tea—

"You find me prepared to offer the refreshment of a cup of delicious bohea. I think my uncle calls it the tea of the Caernarvon Castle."

"A lucky ship, both in her passages and her wares! Yes, it is the article you name, and I can recommend it to all who wish to purchase. But, niece of mine, will you condescend to ac-

quaint this commander in her Majesty's service, and a poor Alderman of her good city of New York, how long you may have been expecting our company ?"

Alida felt at her girdle, and drawing out a small and richly ornamented watch, she coolly examined its hands, as if to learn the hour.

"We are nine. I think it was past the turn of the day when Dinah first mentioned that this pleasure might be expected. But I should also tell you, that packages, which seem to contain letters, have arrived from town."

This was giving a new and sudden direction to the thoughts of the Alderman. He had refrained from entering on those explanations which the circumstances seemed to require, because he well knew that he stood on dangerous ground, and that more might be said than he wished his companion to hear, no less than from amazement at the composure of his ward. He was not sorry therefore to have an excuse to delay the inquiries that appeared so much in character as that of reading the communications of his business correspondents. Swallowing the

contents of the tiny cup he held at a gulp, the eager merchant seized the packet that Alida now offered, and muttering a few words of apology to Ludlow, he left the pavilion.

Until now the commander of the Coquette had not spoken. Wonder, mingled with indignation, sealed his mouth, though he had endeavoured to penetrate the veil which Alida had drawn around her conduct and motives, by a diligent use of his eyes. During the first few moments of the interview, he thought that he could detect, in the midst of her studied calmness, a melancholy smile struggling around her beautiful mouth; but only once had their looks met, as she turned her full, rich, and dark eyes furtively on his face, as if she were curious to know the effect produced by her manner on the mind of the young sailor.

"Have the enemies of the Queen reason to regret the cruise of the Coquette," said la Belle, hurriedly, when she found her glance detected; "or have they dreaded to encounter a prowess, that has already proved their inferiority?"

"Fear or prudence, or perhaps I might say

conscience, has made them wary," returned Ludlow, pointedly emphasizing the latter word. "We have run from the Hook to the edge of the Grand Bank, and returned without success."

"'Tis unlucky. But though the French escaped, have none of the lawless met with punishment? There is a rumour among the slaves that the brigantine which visited us is an object of suspicion to the government!"

"Suspicion!—But I may apply to la Belle Barbérie to know whether the character her commander has obtained be merited?"

Alida smiled, and, her admirer thought, sweetly as ever.

"It would be a sign of extraordinary complaisance were Captain Ludlow to apply to the girls of the colony for instruction in his duty! We may be secret encouragers of the contraband, but surely we are not to be suspected of any greater familiarity with their movements. These hints may compel me to abandon the pleasures of the Lust in Rust, and to seek air and health in some less exposed situation. Hap-

pily the banks of the Hudson offer many that one need be fastidious indeed to reject!"

"Among which you count the Manor House of Kinderhook?"

Again Alida smiled, and Ludlow thought it was triumphantly.

"The dwelling of Oloff Van Staats is said to be commodious, and not badly placed. I have seen it—"

"In your images of the future?" said the young man, observing she hesitated.

Alida laughed downright. But immediately recovering her self-command, she replied—

"Not so fancifully. My knowledge of the beauties of the house of Mr. Van Staats, is confined to very unpoetical glimpses from the river, in passing and repassing. The chimneys are twisted in the most approved style of the Dutch Brabant, and although wanting the storks' nests on their summits, it seems as if there might be that woman's tempter—comfort, around the hearths beneath. The offices, too, have an enticing air for a thrifty housewife!"

"Which office, in compliment to the worthy Patroon, you intend shall not long be vacant?"

Alida was playing with a spoon, curiously wrought to represent the stem and leaves of a tea-plant. She started, dropped the implement, and raised her eyes to the face of her companion. The look was steady, and not without an interest in the evident concern betrayed by the young man.

"It will never be filled by me, Ludlow," was the answer, uttered solemnly, and with a decision that denoted a resolution fixed.

"That declaration removes a mountain!—Oh! Alida, if you could as easily—"

"Hush!" whispered the other, rising and standing for a moment in an attitude of intense expectation. Her eye became brighter, and the bloom on her cheek even deeper than before, while pleasure and hope were both strongly depicted on her beautiful face. "Hush!" she continued, motioning to Ludlow to repress his feelings. "Did you hear nothing?"

The disappointed and yet admiring young man was silent, though he watched her singu-

larly interested air and lovely features with all the intenseness that seemed to characterize her own deportment. As no sound followed that which Alida had heard, or fancied she had heard, she resumed her seat, and appeared to lend her attention once more to her companion.

"You were speaking of mountains?" she said, scarce knowing what she uttered. "The passage between the bays of Newburgh and Tappan has scarce a rival, as I have heard from travelled men."

"I was indeed speaking of a mountain, but it was of one that weighs me to the earth. Your inexplicable conduct and cruel indifference have heaped it on my feelings, Alida. You have said that there is no hope for Oloff Van Staats, and one syllable, spoken with your native ingenuousness and sincerity, has had the effect to blow all my apprehensions from that quarter to the winds. There remains only to account for your absence, to resume the whole of your power over one, who is but too readily disposed to confide in all you say or do."

La Belle Barbérie seemed touched. Her

glance at the young sailor was kinder, and her voice wanted some of its ordinary steadiness, in the reply.

"That power has then been weakened?"

"You will despise me if I say, no; you will distrust me if I say, yes."

"Then silence seems the course best adapted to maintain our present amity. Surely I heard a blow struck lightly on the shutter of that window?"

"Hope sometimes deceives us. This repeated belief would seem to say that you expect a visitor."

A distinct tap on the shutter confirmed the impression of the mistress of the pavilion. Alida looked at her companion, and appeared embarrassed. Her colour varied, and she seemed anxious to utter something, that either her feelings or her prudence suppressed.

"Captain Ludlow, you have once before been an unexpected witness of an interview in la Cour des Fées, that has, I fear, subjected me to unfavourable surmises. But one manly and generous as yourself, can have indulgence for

the little vanities of woman. I expect a visit that perhaps a Queen's officer should not countenance."

"I am no exciseman, to pry into wardrobes and secret repositories, but one whose duty it is to act only on the high seas, and against the more open violators of the law. If you have any without whose presence you desire, let them enter without dread of my office. When we meet in a more suitable place, I shall know how to take my revenge."

His companion looked grateful, and bowed her acknowledgments. She then made a ringing sound, by using a spoon on the interior of one of the vessels of the tea equipage. The shrubbery which shaded a window stirred, and presently the young stranger, already so well known in the former pages of this work, and in the scenes of the brigantine, appeared in the low balcony. His person was scarcely seen, before a light bale of goods was tossed past him into the centre of the room.

"I send my certificate of character as an avant courier," said the gay dealer in contra-

band, or Master Seadrift, as he was called by the Alderman, touching his cap gallantly to the mistress of la Cour des Fées, and then, somewhat more ceremoniously, to her companion, after which he returned the gold-bound covering to its seat on a bed of rich and glossy curls, and sought his package. Here is one more customer than I bargained for, and I look to more than common gain! We have met before, Captain Ludlow."

"We have, Sir Skimmer of the Seas, and we shall meet again. Winds may change, and fortune yet favour the right!"

"We trust to the sea-green lady's care," returned the extraordinary smuggler, pointing with a species of reverence, real or affected, to the image that was beautifully worked, in rich colours, on the velvet of his cap. "What has been will be, and the past gives a hope for the future. We meet here on neutral ground, I trust?"

"I am the commander of a royal cruiser, Sir," haughtily returned the other.

"Queen Anne may be proud of her ser-

vant !—but we neglect our affairs. A thousand pardons, lovely mistress of la Cour des Fées. This meeting of two rude mariners does a slight to your beauty, and little credit to the fealty due the sex. Having done with all compliments, I have to offer certain articles that never failed to cause the brightest eyes to grow more brilliant, and at which duchesses have gazed with many longings."

" You speak with confidence of your associations, Master Seadrift, and rate noble personages among your customers, as familiarly as if you dealt in offices of state."

" This skilful servitor of the Queen will tell you, lady, that the wind which is a gale on the Atlantic, may scarce cool the burning cheek of a girl on the land, and that the links in life are as curiously interlocked as the ropes of a ship. The Ephesian temple and the Indian wigwam rested on the same earth."

" From which you infer that rank does not alter nature. We must admit, Captain Ludlow, that Master Seadrift understands a wo-

man's heart, when he tempts her with stores of tissues gay as these!"

Ludlow had watched the speakers in silence. The manner of Alida was far less embarrassed than when he had before seen her in the smuggler's company, and his blood fired, when he saw that their eyes met with a secret and friendly intelligence. He had remained, however, with a resolution to be calm, and to know the worst. Conquering the expression of his feelings by a great effort, he answered with an exterior of composure, though not without some of that bitterness in his emphasis which he felt at his heart.

"If Master Seadrift has this knowledge, he may value himself on his good fortune," was the reply.

"Much intercourse with the sex, who are my best customers, has something helped me," returned the cavalier dealer in contraband. "Here is a brocade whose fellow is worn openly in the presence of our royal mistress, though it came from the forbidden looms of Italy; and the ladies of the court return from patriotically danc-

ing in the fabrics of home, to please the public eye once in the year, to wear these more agreeable inventions all the rest of it, to please themselves. Tell me, why does the Englishman, with his pale sun, spend thousands to force a sickly imitation of the gifts of the tropics, but because he pines for forbidden fruit; or why does your Paris gourmand roll a fig on his tongue, that a Lazzarone of Naples would cast into his bay, but because he wishes to enjoy the bounties of a low latitude under a watery sky? I have seen an individual feast on the eau sucré of an European pine that cost a guinea, while his palate would have refused the same fruit, with its delicious compound of acid and sweet, mellowed to ripeness under a burning sun, merely because he could have it for nothing. This is the secret of our patronage, and as the sex are most liable to its influence, we owe them most gratitude."

"You have travelled, Master Seadrift," returned la Belle, smiling, while she tossed the rich contents of the bale on the carpet, "and

treat of usages as familiarly as you speak of dignities."

"The lady of the sea-green mantle does not permit an idle servant. We follow the direction of her guiding hand; sometimes it points our course among the isles of the Adriatic, and at others, on your stormy American coasts. There is little of Europe between Gibraltar and the Cattegat that I have not visited."

"But Italy has been the favourite, if one may judge by the number of her fabrics that you produce."

"Italy, France, and Flanders divide my custom; though you are right in believing the former most in favour. Many years of early life did I pass on the noble coasts of that romantic region. One who protected and guided my infancy and youth even left me for a time, under instruction, on the little plain of Sorrento."

"And where can this plain be found?—for the residence of so famous a rover may one day become the theme of song, and is likely to occupy the leisure of the curious."

"The grace of the speaker may well excuse

the irony! Sorrento is a village on the southern shore of the renowned Naples bay. Fire has wrought many changes in that soft, but wild country, and if, as religionists believe, the fountains of the great deep were ever broken up, and the earth's crust disturbed, to permit its secret springs to issue on the surface, this may have been one of the spots chosen by Him whose touch leaves marks that are indelible, in which to show his power. The bed of the earth itself, in all that region, appears to have been but the vomitings of volcanos, and the Sorrentine passes his peaceable life in the bed of an extinguished crater. 'Tis curious to see in what manner the men of the middle ages have built their town on the margin of the sea, where the element has swallowed one half the ragged basin, and how they have taken the yawning crevices of the tufo for ditches to protect their walls! I have visited many lands, and seen nature in nearly every clime, but no spot has yet presented, in a single view, so pleasant a combination of natural objects, mingled with mighty recollections, as that lovely abode on the Sorrentine cliffs!"

"Recount me these pleasures, that in memory seem so agreeable, while I examine further into the contents of the bale."

The gay young free-trader paused, and he seemed lost in images of the past. Then, with a melancholy smile, he soon continued; "Though many years are gone," he said, "I can recal the beauties of that scene, as vividly as if they still stood before the eye. Our abode was on the verge of the cliffs. In front lay the deep blue water, and on its further shore was a line of objects such as accident or design rarely assembles in one view. Fancy thyself, lady, at my side, and follow the curvature of the northern shore, as I trace the outline of that glorious scene! That high, mountainous, and ragged island, on the extreme left, is modern Ischia. Its origin is unknown, though piles of lava lie along its coast, which seems fresh as that thrown from the mountain yesterday. The long, low bit of land, insulated like its neighbour, is called Procida, a scion of ancient Greece. Its people still pre-

serve in dress and speech marks of their origin. The narrow strait conducts you to a high and naked bluff. That is the Misenum of old. Here Eneas came to land, and Rome held her fleets, and thence Pliny took the water to get a nearer view of the labours of the volcano, after its awakening from centuries of sleep. In the hollow of the ridge between that naked bluff and the next swell of the mountain, lie the fabulous Styx, the Elysian Fields, and the place of the dead, as fixed by the Mantuan. More on the height and nearer to the sea, lie buried in the earth the vast vaults of the Piscina Mirabile, and the gloomy caverns of the Hundred Chambers: places that equally denote the luxury and the despotism of Rome. Nearer to the vast pile of castle, that is visible so many leagues, is the graceful and winding Baian harbour, and against the side of its sheltering hills, once lay the city of villas. To that sheltered hill, emperors, consuls, poets, and warriors, crowded from the capital, in quest of repose, and to breathe the pure air of a spot, in which pestilence has since made its

abode. The earth is still covered with the remains of their magnificence, and ruins of temples and baths are scattered freely among the olives and fig-trees of the peasant. A fainter bluff limits the north-eastern boundary of the little bay. On it once stood the dwellings of emperors. There Cæsar sought retirement, and the warm springs on its side are yet called the baths of the bloody Nero. That small conical hill, which, as you see, possesses a greener and fresher look than the adjoining land, is a cone rejected by the cauldron beneath but two brief centuries since. It occupies, in part, the site of the ancient Lucrine lake. All that remains of that famous receptacle of the epicure, is the small and shallow sheet at its base, which is separated from the sea by a mere thread of sand. More in the rear, and surrounded by dreary hills, lie the waters of Avernus. On their banks still stand the ruins of a temple, in which rites were celebrated to the infernal deities. The grotto of the Sybil pierces that ridge on the left, and the Cumæan passage is nearly in its rear. The

town, which is seen a mile to the right, is Pozzuoli; a port of the ancients, and a spot now visited for its temples of Jupiter and Neptune, its mouldering amphitheatre, and its half-buried tombs. Here Caligula attempted his ambitious bridge, and while crossing thence to Baiæ, the vile Nero had the life of his own mother assailed. It was there, too, that holy Paul came to land, when journeying a prisoner to Rome. The small but high island nearly in its front, is Nisida, the place to which Marcus Brutus retired after the deed at the foot of Pompey's statue, where he possessed a villa, and whence he and Cassius sailed to meet the shade and the vengeance of the murdered Cæsar, at Philippi. Then comes a crowd of sites more known in the middle ages, though just below that mountain, in the back-ground, is the famous subterranean road of which Strabo and Seneca are said to speak, and through which the peasant still daily drives his ass to the markets of the modern city. At its entrance is the reputed tomb of Virgil, and then commences an amphitheatre of white and ter-

raced dwellings. This is noisy Napoli itself, crowned with its rocky castle of St. Elmo! The vast plain to the right, is that which held the enervating Capua, and so many other cities, on its bosom. To this succeeds the insulated mountain of the volcano, with its summit torn in triple tops. 'Tis said that villas and villages, towns and cities, lie buried beneath the vineyards and palaces which crowd its base. The ancient and unhappy city of Pompeii stood on that luckless plain, which, following the shores of the bay, comes next, and then we take up the line of the mountain promontory, which forms the Sorrentine side of the water."

"One who has had such schooling, should know better how to turn it to a good account," said Ludlow sternly, when the excited smuggler ceased to speak.

"In other lands, men derive their learning from books; in Italy, children acquire knowledge by the study of visible things," was the undisturbed answer.

"Some from this country are fond of believing that our own bay, these summer skies,

and the climate in general, should have a strict resemblance to those of a region which lies precisely in our own latitude," observed Alida, so hastily, as to betray a desire to preserve the peace between her guests.

"That your Manhattan and Rariton waters are broad and pleasant, none can deny, and that lovely beings dwell on their banks, lady," returned Seadrift, gallantly lifting his cap, "my own senses have witnessed. But 'twere wiser to select some other point of your excellence for comparison, than a competition with the glorious waters, the fantastic and mountain isles, and the sunny hill-sides of modern Napoli! 'Tis certain the latitude is even in your favour, and that a benificent sun does not fail of its office in one region more than in the other. But the forests of America are still too pregnant of vapours and exhalations, not to impair the purity of the native air. If I have seen much of the Mediterranean, neither am I a stranger to these coasts. While there are so many points of resemblance in their climates,

there are also many and marked causes of difference."

"Teach us, then, what forms these distinctions, that in speaking of our bay and skies we may not be led into error."

"You do me honour, lady; I am of no great schooling and of humble powers of speech: still, the little that observation may have taught me, shall not be churlishly withheld. Your Italian atmosphere, taking the humidity of the seas, is sometimes hazy. Still water in large bodies, other than in the two seas, is little known in those distant countries. Few objects in nature are drier than an Italian river during those months when the sun has most influence. The effect is visible in the air, which is in general elastic, dry, and obedient to the general laws of the climate. There floats less exhalation in the form of fine and nearly invisible vapour than in these wooded regions.—At least, so he of whom I spoke, as one who guided my youth, was wont to say."

"You hesitate to tell us of our skies, our evening light, and of our bay?"

"It shall be said, and said sincerely. Of the bays, each seems to have been appropriated to that for which nature most intended it. The one is poetic, indolent, and full of graceful but glorious beauty; more pregnant of enjoyment than of usefulness. The other will, one day, be the mart of the world!"

"You still shrink from pronouncing on their beauty," said Alida, disappointed, in spite of an affected indifference to the subject.

"It is ever the common fault of old communities to overvalue themselves, and to undervalue new actors in the great drama of nations, as men long successful disregard the efforts of new aspirants for favour," said Seadrift, while he looked with amazement at the pettish eye of the frowning beauty. "In this instance, however, Europe has not so greatly erred. They who see much resemblance between the bay of Naples and this of Manhattan, have fertile brains, since it rests altogether on the circumstance that there is much water in both, and a passage between an island and the main land, in one, to resemble a passage between two islands in the other. This is

an estuary, that a gulf; and while the former has the green and turbid water of a shelving shore and of tributary rivers, the, I take, latter has the blue and limpid element of a deep sea. In these distinctions I stake no account of ragged and rocky mountains, with the indescribable play of golden and rosy light upon their broken surfaces, nor of a coast that teems with the recollections of three thousand years!"

"I fear to question more. But surely our skies may be mentioned even by the side of those you vaunt?"

"Of the skies, truly, you have more reason to be confident. I remember that standing on the Capo di Monte, which overlooks the little picturesque and crowded beach of the Marina Grande, at Sorrento—a spot that teems with all that is poetic in the fisherman's life—he of whom I have spoken, once pointed to the transparent vault above, and said, 'there is the moon of America!' The colours of the rocket were not more vivid than the stars that night, for a Tramontana had swept every impurity from the air, far upon the neighbouring sea. But

nights like that are rare indeed in any clime! The inhabitants of low latitudes enjoy them occasionally; those of higher, never."

"And then our flattering belief that these western sunsets rival those of Italy, is delusion?"

"Not so, lady. They rival without resembling. The colour of the étui, on which so fair a hand is resting, is not softer than the hues one sees in the heavens of Italy. But if your evening sky wants the pearly light, the rosy clouds, and the soft tints which, at that hour, melt into each other, across the entire vault of Napoli, it far excels in the vividness of the glow, in the depth of the transitions, and in the richness of colours. Those are only more delicate, while these are more gorgeous! When there shall be less exhalation from your forests, the same causes may produce the same effects. Until then, America must be content to pride herself on an exhibition of nature's beauty, in a new, though scarcely in a less pleasing form."

"Then they who come among us from Europe, are but half right when they deride the pretensions of our bay and heavens?"

"Which is much nearer the truth than they are wont to be on the subject of this continent. Speak of the many rivers, the double outlet, the numberless basins, and the unequalled facilities of your Manhattan harbour—for in time they will come to render all the beauties of the unrivalled bay of Naples vain—but tempt not the stranger to push the comparison beyond. Be grateful for your skies, lady, for few live under fairer, or more beneficent. But I tire you with these opinions, when here are colours that have more charms for a young and lively imagination than even the tints of nature!"

La Belle Barbérie smiled on the dealer in contraband, with an interest that sickened Ludlow, and she was about to reply in better humour, when the voice of her uncle announced his near approach.

CHAPTER XI.

"There shall be in England seven half-penny loaves sold for a penny; the three hooped pot shall have ten hoops, and I will make it felony to drink small beer."

Jack Cade.

Had Alderman Van Beverout been a party in the preceding dialogue, he could not have uttered words more apposite than the exclamation with which he first saluted the ears of those in the pavilion.

"Gales and climates!" exclaimed the merchant, entering with an open letter in his hand. "Here are advices received, by way of Curacoa, and the coast of Africa, that the good ship Musk-rat met with foul winds off the Azores

which lengthened her passage home to seventeen weeks—this is too much precious time wasted between markets, Captain Cornelius Ludlow, and 'twill do discredit to the good character of the ship, which has hitherto always maintained a sound reputation, never needing more than the regular seven months to make the voyage home and out again. If our vessels fall into this lazy train, we shall never get a skin to Bristol till it is past use. What have we here, niece? Merchandize! and of a suspicious fabric—who has the invoice of these goods, and in what vessel were they shipped?"

"These are questions that may be better answered by their owner," returned la Belle, pointing gravely, and not without tremor in her voice, towards the dealer in contraband, who, at the approach of the Alderman, had shrunk back as far as possible from view.

Myndert cast an uneasy glance at the unmoved countenance of the commander of the royal cruiser, after having bestowed a brief but understanding look at the contents of the bale. "Captain Ludlow, the chaser is chased!"

he said. "After sailing about the Atlantic for a week or more, like a Jew broker's clerk running up and down the Boom Key at Rotterdam, to get off a consignment of damaged tea, we are fairly caught ourselves! To what fall in prices, or change in the sentiments of the Board of Trade, am I indebted for the honour of this visit, Master a—a—a— gay dealer in green ladies and bright tissues?"

The confident and gallant manner of the free-trader had vanished. In its place, there appeared a hesitating and embarrassed air, that the individual was not wont to exhibit, blended with some apparent indecision on the subject of his reply.

"It is the business of those who hazard much in order to minister to the wants of life," he said, after a pause that was sufficiently expressive of the entire change in his demeanour, "to seek customers where there is a reputation for liberality. I hope my boldness will be overlooked on account of its motive, and that you will aid the lady in judging of the value of my articles, and of their reasonableness, as to price, with your own superior experience."

Myndert was quite as much astonished by this language and the subdued manner of the smuggler, as Ludlow himself. When he expected the heaviest demand on his address, in order to check the usual froward and reckless familiarity of Seadrift, in order that his connection with the Skimmer of the Seas might be as much as possible involved in ambiguity, to his own amazement, he found his purpose more than aided by the sudden and extraordinary respect with which he was treated. Emboldened and perhaps a little elevated in his own esteem by this unexpected deference, which the worthy Alderman, shrewd as he was in common, did not fail, like other men, to impute to some inherent quality of his own, he answered with a greater depth of voice, and a more protecting air than he might otherwise have deemed it prudent to assume, to one who had so frequently given him proofs of his own fearless manner of viewing things.

" This is being more eager as a trader, than prudent as one who should know the value of credit," he said, making at the same time a

lofty gesture to betoken indulgence for so venial an error. "We must overlook the mistake, Captain Ludlow, since, as the young man truly observes in his defence, gain acquired in honest traffic, is a commendable and wholesome pursuit. One who appears as if he might not be ignorant of the laws, should know that our virtuous Queen and her wise counsellors have decided that Mother England can produce most that a colonist can consume! Ay! and that she can consume, too, most that the colonist can produce!"

"I pretend not to this ignorance, Sir, but, in pursuing my humble barter, I merely follow a principle of nature by endeavouring to provide for my own interests. We of the contraband do but play at hazard with the authorities. When we pass the gauntlet unharmed, we gain; and when we lose, the servants of the crown find their profit. The stakes are equal, and the game should not be stigmatized as unfair. Would the rulers of the world once remove the unnecessary shackles they impose on commerce, our calling would disappear, and the name of

free-trader would then belong to the richest and most esteemed houses."

The Alderman drew a long, low whistle. Motioning to his companions to be seated, he placed his own compact person in a chair, crossed his legs with an air of self-complacency, and resumed the discourse.

"These are very pretty sentiments, Master —a—a—a—, you bear a worthy name, no doubt, my ingenious commentator on commerce?"

"They call me Seadrift, when they spare a harsher term," returned the other, meekly declining to be seated.

"These are pretty sentiments, Master Seadrift, and they much become a gentleman who lives by practical comments on the revenue laws. This is a wise world, Captain Cornelius Ludlow, and in it there are many men whose heads are filled, like bales of goods, with a general assortment of ideas.—Horn books and primmers! here have Van Bummel, Schoenbroeck, and Van der Donck, just sent me a very neatly folded pamphlet, written in good

Leyden Dutch, to prove that trade is an exchange of what the author calls equivalents, and that nations have nothing to do but to throw open their ports, in order to make a millenium among the merchants !"

" There are many ingenious men who entertain the same opinions," observed Ludlow, steady in his resolution to be merely a quiet observer of all that passed.

" What cannot a cunning head devise to spoil paper with ! Trade is a racer, gentlemen, and merchants the jockies who ride. He who carries most weight may lose ; but then Nature does not give all men the same dimensions, and judges are as necessary to the struggles of the mart as to those of the course. Go, mount your gelding, if you are lucky enough to have one that has not been melted into a weasel by the heartless blacks, and ride out to Harlaem Flats, on a fine October day, and witness the manner in which the trial of speed is made. The rogues of riders cut in here, and over there ; now the whip, and now the spur ; and though they start fair, which is more than can always be said of

trade, some one is sure to win. When it is neck and neck, then the heat is to be gone over until the best bottom gains the prize."

"Why is it then that men of deep reflection so often think that commerce flourishes most when least encumbered?"

"Why is one man born to make laws and another to break them?—Does not the horse run faster with his four legs free, than when in hopples? But in trade, Master Seadrift, and Captain Cornelius Ludlow, each of us is his own jockey; and—putting the aid of custom-house laws out of the question—just as Nature has happened to make him. Fat or lean, big bones, or fine bones, he must get to the goal as well as he can. Therefore your heavy weights call out for sand-bags and belts, to make all even. That the steed may be crushed with his load, is no proof that his chance of winning will not be better by bringing all the riders to the same level."

"But, to quit these similes," continued Ludlow, "if trade be but an exchange of equivalents—"

"Beggary and stoppages!" interrupted the Alderman, who was far more dogmatical than courteous in argument. "This is the language of men who have read all sorts of books but ledgers. Here have I advices from Tongue and Twaddle, of London, which state the nett proceeds of a little adventure, shipped by the brig Moose, that reached the river on the 16th of April, ultimo. The history of the whole transaction can be put in a child's muff. You are a discreet youth, Captain Cornelius, and as to you, Master Seadrift, the affair is altogether out of your line; therefore, as I was observing, here are the items, made out only a fortnight since, in the shape of a memorandum." While speaking, the Alderman had placed his spectacles and drawn his tablets from a pocket. Adjusting himself to the light, he continued: 'Paid bill of Sand, Furnace and Glass, for beads, £3. 2s. 6d.—Package and box, 1s. 10½d. —Shipping charges and freight, 11s. 4d.—Insurance, averaged at 1s. 5d.—Freight, charges and commission of agent among Mohawks, £10.—Do. do. do. of shipment and sale of

furs in England, £7. 2s. Total of costs and charges, £20. 18s. 8½d. all in sterling money. Note, sale of furs, to Frost and Rich, nett avails, £196. 11s. 3d. — Balance, as per contra, £175. 12s. 5d½.'—a very satisfactory equivalent this, Master Cornelius, to appear on the books of Tongue and Twaddle, where I stand charged with the original investment of £20. 19s. 8d½! How much the Empress of Germany may pay the firm of Frost and Rich for the articles does not appear?"

"Nor does it appear that more was got for your beads in the Mohawk country, than they were valued at there, or was paid for the skins than they were worth where they were produced."

Whe—w—w—w!" whistled the merchant, as he returned the tablets to his pocket. "One would think that thou hadst been studying the Leyden pamphleteer, son of my old friend! If the savage thinks so little of his skins, and so much of my beads, I shall never take the pains to set him right; else, always by permission of the Board of Trade, we shall see

him one day turning his bark canoe into a good ship, and going in quest of his own ornaments. Enterprize and voyages! who knows that the rogue would see fit to stop at London, even, in which case the mother country might lose the profit of the sale at Vienna, and the Mohawk set up his carriage on the difference in the value of markets! Thus, you see, in order to run a fair race, the horses must start even, carry equal weights, and, after all, one commonly wins. Your metaphysics are no better than so much philosophical gold-leaf, which a cunning reasoner beats out into a sheet as large as the broadest American lake, to make dunces believe the earth can be transmuted into the precious material, while a plain, practical man puts the value of the metal into his pocket in good current coin."

"And yet I hear you complain that Parliament has legislated more than is good for trade, and speak in a manner of the proceedings at home, that, you will excuse me for saying, would better become a Hollander than a subject of the crown."

"Have I not told you, that the horse will run faster without a rider than with a pack saddle on his back! Give your own jockey as little, and your adversary's as much weight as you can, if you wish to win. I complain of the borough men, because they make laws for us, and not for themselves. As I often tell my worthy friend, Alderman Gulp, eating is good for life, but a surfeit makes a will necessary."

"From all which I infer, that the opinions of your Leyden correspondent are not those of Mr. Van Beverout."

The Alderman laid a finger on his nose, and looked at his companions, for a moment, without answering.

"Those Leydeners are a sagacious breed! If the United Provinces had but ground to stand on, they would, like the philosopher who boasted of his lever, move the world! The sly rogues think that the Amsterdammers have naturally an easy seat, and they wish to persuade all others to ride bare back. I shall send the pamphlet up into the Indian country, and pay some scholar to have it translated into the

Mohawk tongue, in order that the famous chief Schendoh, when the missionaries shall have taught him to read, may entertain right views of equivalents! I am not certain that I may not make the worthy divines a present, to help the good fruits to ripen."

The Alderman leered round upon his auditors, and folding his hands meekly on his breast, he appeared to leave his eloquence to work its own effects.

"These opinions favour but little the occupation of the—the gentleman who now honours us with his company," said Ludlow, regarding the gay-looking smuggler with an eye that shewed how much he was embarrassed to find a suitable appellation, for one whose appearance was so much at variance with his pursuits. "If restrictions are necessary to commerce, the lawless trader is surely left without an excuse for his calling."

"I as much admire your discretion, in practice, as the justice of your sentiments, in theory, Captain Ludlow," returned the Alderman. "In a rencontre on the high seas, it would be

your duty to render captive the brigantine of this person; but in what may be called the privacy of domestic retirement, you are content to ease your mind in moralities! I feel it my duty, too, to speak on this point, and shall take so favourable an occasion, when all is pacific, to disburthen myself of some sentiments that suggest themselves very naturally under the circumstances." Myndert then turned himself towards the dealer in contraband, and continued, much in the manner of a city magistrate reading a lesson of propriety to some disturber of the peace of society. "You appear here, Master Seadrift," he said, "under what, to borrow a figure from your profession, may be called false colours. You bear the countenance of one who might be a useful subject, and yet are you suspected of being addicted to certain practices, which—I will not say they are dishonest or even discreditable, for on that head the opinions of men are much divided—but which certainly have no tendency to assist her Majesty in bringing her wars to a glorious issue, by securing to her European dominions

that monopoly of trade by which it is her greatest desire to ease us of the colonies of looking any further after our particular interests than beyond the doors of her own custom-houses. This is an indiscretion, to give the act its gentlest appellation, and I regret to add, it is accompanied by certain circumstances which rather heighten than lessen the delinquency." The Alderman paused a moment, to observe the effect of his admonition, and to judge, by the eye of the free-trader, how much farther he might push his artifice; but perceiving, to his own surprise, that the other bent his face to the floor and stood like one rebuked, he took courage to proceed. "You have introduced into this portion of my dwelling, which is exclusively inhabited by my niece, who is neither of a sex, nor of years to be legally arraigned for any oversight of this nature, sundries of which it is the pleasure of the Queen's advisers her subjects in the colonies should not know the use, since in the nature of fabrications they cannot be submitted to the supervising care of the ingenious artisans of the mother island. Woman,

Master Seadrift, is a creature liable to the influence of temptation, and in few things is she weaker than in her efforts to resist the allurements of articles which may aid in adorning her person. My niece, the daughter of Etienne Barbérie, may also have an hereditary weakness on this head, since the females of France study these inventions more than those of some other countries. It is not my intention, however, to manifest any unreasonable severity, since if old Etienne has communicated any hereditary feebleness on the subject of fancy, he has also left his daughter the means of paying for it. Hand in your account, therefore, and the debt shall be discharged, if debt has been incurred. And this brings me to the last and the gravest of your offences.

"Capital is no doubt the foundation on which a merchant builds his edifice of character," continued Myndert, after taking another jealous survey of the countenance of him he addressed; "but credit is the ornaments of its front. This is a corner-stone—that the pilastres and carvings by which the building is rendered pleasant;

sometimes, when age has undermined the basement, it is the columns on which the superstructure rests, or even the roof by which the occupant is sheltered. It renders the rich man safe, the dealer of moderate means active and respectable, and it causes even the poor man to hold up his head in hope. Though I admit that buyer and seller need both be wary, when it stands unsupported by any substantial base. This being the value of credit, Master Seadrift, none should assail it without sufficient cause, for tts quality is of a nature too tender for rude treatment. I learned when a youth, in my travels in Holland—through which country, by means of the Trekschuyts, I passed with sufficient deliberation to profit by what was seen—the importance of avoiding, on all occasions, bringing credit into disrepute. As one event that occurred offers an apposite parallel of what I have now to advance, I shall make a tender of the facts, in the way of illustration. The circumstances shew the awful uncertainty of things in this transitory life, Captain Ludlow, and forewarn the most vigorous and youthful that

the strong of arm may be cut down in his pride, like the tender plant of the fields! The banking house of Van Gelt and Van Stopper, in Amsterdam, had dealt largely in securities, issued by the emperor for the support of his wars. It happened at the time that Fortune had favoured the Ottoman, who was then pressing the city of Belgrade with some prospects of success. Well, Sirs, a headstrong and ill-advised laundress had taken possession of an elevated terrace in the centre of the town, in order to dry her clothes. This woman was in the act of commencing the distribution of her linens and muslins with the break of day, when the Mussulmans awoke the garrison by a rude assault. Some who had been posted in a position that permitted of retreat, having seen certain bundles of crimson, and green, and yellow, on an elevated parapet, mistook them for the heads of so many Turks; and they spread the report far and near, that a countless band of the infidels, led on by a vast number of sheriffs in green turbans, had gained the heart of the place before they were induced to retire. The ru-

mour soon took the shape of a circumstantial detail, and having reached Amsterdam, it caused the funds of the imperialists to look down. There was much question on the Exchange concerning the probable loss of Van Gelt and Van Stopper in consequence. Just as speculation was at its greatest height on this head, the monkey of a Savoyard escaped from its string and concealed himself in a nut-shop, a few doors distant from the banking-house of the firm, where a crowd of Jew boys collected to witness its antics. Men of reflection, seeing what they mistook for a demonstration on the part of the children of the Israelites, began to feel uneasiness for their own property. Draughts multiplied, and the worthy bankers, in order to prove their solidity, disdained to shut their doors at the usual hour. Money was paid throughout the night, and before noon, on the following day, Van Gelt had cut his throat in a summer-house that stood on the banks of the Utrecht canal, and Van Stopper was seen smoking a pipe among strong-boxes that were entirely empty. At two o'clock the post brought the

intelligence that the Mussulmans were repulsed, and that the laundress was hanged, though I never knew exactly for what crime, as she certainly was not a debtor of the unhappy firm. These are some of the warning events of life, gentlemen, and as I feel sure of addressing those who are capable of making the application, I shall now conclude by advising all who hear me to great discretion of speech on every matter connected with commercial character."

When Myndert ceased speaking, he threw another glance around him, in order to note the effect his words had produced, and more particularly to ascertain whether he had not drawn a draught on the forbearance of the free-trader which might still meet with a protest. He was at a loss to account for the marked and unusual deference with which he was treated by one who, while he was never coarse, seldom exhibited much complaisance for the opinions of a man he was in the habit of meeting so familiarly on matters of pecuniary interest. During the whole of the foregoing harangue, the young mariner of the brigantine had maintained the same

attitude of modest attention, and when his eyes were permitted to rise, it was only to steal uneasy looks at the face of Alida. La Belle Barbérie had also listened to her uncle's eloquence with a more thoughtful air than common. She met the occasional glances of the dealer in contraband with answering sympathy, and in short, the most indifferent observer of their deportment might have seen that circumstances had created between them a confidence and intelligence, which, if it were not absolutely of the most tender, was unequivocally of the most intimate character. All this Ludlow plainly saw, though the burgher had been too much engrossed with the ideas he had so complacently dealt out, to note the fact.

"Now that my mind is so well stored with maxims on commerce, which I shall esteem as so many commentaries on the instructions of my lords of the admiralty," observed the Captain, after a brief interval of silence, "it may be permitted to turn our attention to things less metaphysical. The present occasion is favourable to inquire after the fate of the shipmate we lost

in the last cruise, and it ought not to be neglected."

"You speak truth, Mr. Cornelius—the Patroon of Kinderhook is not a man to fall into the sea, like an anker of forbidden liquor, and no questions asked. Leave this matter to my discretion, Sir, and trust me, the tenants of the third-best estate in the colony shall not long be without tidings of their landlord. If you will accompany Master Seadrift into the other part of the villa for a reasonable time, I shall possess myself of all the facts that are at all pertinent to the right understanding of the case."

The commander of the royal cruiser and the young mariner of the brigantine appeared to think that a compliance with this invitation would bring about a singular association. The hesitation of the latter, however, was far the most visible, since Ludlow had coolly determined to maintain his neutral character, until a proper moment to act as a faithful servitor of his royal mistress should arrive. He knew, or firmly believed, that the Water Witch again lay in the Cove, concealed by the shadows of

the surrounding wood, and as he had once before suffered by the superior address of the smugglers, he was now resolved to act with so much caution as to enable him to return to his ship in time to proceed against her with decision, and, as he hoped, with effect. In addition to his motive for artifice, there was that in the manner and language of the contraband dealer to place him altogether above the ordinary men of his pursuit, and indeed to create in his favour a certain degree of interest, which the officer of the crown was compelled to admit. He therefore bowed with sufficient courtesy, and professed his readiness to follow the suggestions of the Alderman.

"We have met on neutral ground, Master Seadrift," said Ludlow, to his gay companion, as they quitted the saloon of la Cour des Fées; "and though bent on different objects, we may discourse amicably of the past. The Skimmer of the Seas has a reputation, in his way, that almost raises him to a level of the seaman distinguished in a better service. I will ever testify to his skill and coolness as a mariner, however

much I may lament that those fine qualities have received so unhappy a direction."

"This is speaking with a becoming reservation for the rights of the crown, and with meet respect for the barons of the Exchequer!" retorted Seadrift, whose former, and we may say natural spirit, seemed to return, as he left the presence of the burgher. "We follow the pursuit, Captain Ludlow, in which accident has cast our fortunes. You serve a Queen you never saw, and a nation who will use you in her need, and despise you in her prosperity, and I serve myself. Let reason decide between us."

"I admire this frankness, Sir, and have hopes of a better understanding between us, now that you have done with the mystifications of your sea-green woman. The farce has been well enacted, though, with the exception of Oloff Van Staats, and those enlightened spirits you lead about the ocean, it has not made many converts to necromancy."

The free-trader permitted his handsome mouth to relax in a smile.

"We have our mistress, too," he said, "but she exacts no tribute. All that is gained, goes to enrich her subjects, while all that she knows, is cheerfully imparted for their use. If we are obedient, it is because we have experienced her justice and wisdom. I hope Queen Anne deals as kindly by those who risk life and limb in her cause."

"Is it part of the policy of her you follow to reveal the fate of the Patroon? for though rivals in one dear object—or rather I should say, once rivals, in that object—I cannot see a guest quit my ship with so little ceremony, without an interest in his welfare."

"You make a just distinction," returned Sea-drift, smiling still more meaningly. "Once rivals is indeed the better expression. Mr. Van Staats is a brave man, however ignorant he may be of the seaman's art. One who has showed so much spirit will be certain of protection from personal injury in the care of the Skimmer of the Seas."

"I do not constitute myself the keeper of Mr. Van Staats, still as the commander of the ship

whence he has been—what shall I term the manner of his abduction?—for I would not willingly use, at this moment, a term that may prove disagreeable—"

"Speak freely, Sir, and fear not to offend: we of the brigantine are accustomed to divers epithets, that might startle less practised ears. We are not to learn, at this late hour, that in order to become respectable, roguery must have the sanction of government. You were pleased, Captain Ludlow, to name the mystifications of the Water Witch, but you seem indifferent to those that are hourly practised near you in the world, and which, without the pleasantry of this of ours, have not half its innocence."

"There is little novelty in the expedient of seeking to justify the delinquency of individuals by the failings of society."

"I confess it is rather just than original. Triteness and truth appear to be sisters! And yet do we find ourselves driven to this apology, since the refinement of us of the brigantine, has not yet attained to the point of understanding all the excellence of novelty in morals."

"I believe there is a mandate of sufficient antiquity, which bids us to render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's."

"A mandate which our modern Cæsars have most liberally construed. I am a poor casuist, Sir, nor do I think the loyal commander of the Coquette would wish to uphold all that sophistry can invent on such a subject. If we begin with potentates, for instance, we shall find the most christian king bent on appropriating as many of his neighbour's goods to his own use, as ambition, under the name of glory, can covet; the most catholic, covering with the mantle of his catholicity, a greater multitude of enormities, on this very continent, than even charity itself could conceal; and our own gracious sovereign, whose virtues and whose mildness are celebrated in prose and verse, causing rivers of blood to run, in order that the little island over which she rules may swell out, like the frog in the fable, to dimensions that nature has denied, and which will one day inflict the unfortunate death that befel the ambitious inhabitant of the pool. The gallows awaits the pickpocket; but

your robber under a pennant is dubbed a knight! The man who amasses wealth by gainful industry is ashamed of his origin, while he who has stolen from churches, laid villages under contribution, and cut throats by thousands, to divide the spoils of a galleon, or a military chest, has gained gold on the highway of glory! Europe has reached an exceeding pass of civilization, it may not be denied; but before society inflicts so severe censure on the acts of individuals, notwithstanding the triteness of the opinion, I must say it is bound to look more closely to the example it sets in its collective character."

"These are points on which our difference of opinion is likely to be lasting," said Ludlow, assuming the severe air of one who had the world on his side. "We will defer the discussion to a moment of greater leisure, Sir. Am I to learn more of Mr. Van Staats, or is the question of his fate to become the subject of a serious official inquiry?"

"The Patroon of Kinderhook is a bold boarder," returned the free-trader, laughing;

"he has carried the residence of the lady of the brigantine by a coup de main, and he reposes on his laurels! We of the contraband are merrier in our privacy than is thought, and those who join our mess seldom wish to quit it."

"There may be occasion to look further into its mysteries—until when, I wish you adieu."

"Hold!" gaily cried the other, observing that Ludlow was about to quit the room—"Let the time of our uncertainty be short, I pray thee. Our mistress is like the insect which takes the colour of the leaf on which it dwells. You have seen her in her sea-green robe, which she never fails to wear when roving over the soundings of your American coast; but in the deep waters her mantle vies with the blue of the ocean's depths. Symptoms of a change, which always denote an intended excursion far beyond the influence of the land, have been seen."

"Hearkee, Master Seadrift! This foolery may do while you possess the power to maintain it. But remember, that though the law only

punishes the illegal trader by confiscation of his goods when taken, it punishes the kidnapper with personal pains, and sometimes with—death! And more, remember that the line which divides smuggling from piracy is easily past, while the return becomes impossible."

"For this generous counsel, in my mistress's name, I thank thee," the gay mariner replied, bowing with a gravity that rather heightened than concealed his irony. "Your Coquette is broad in the reach of her booms, and swift on the water, Captain Ludlow; but let her be capricious, wilful, deceitful, nay, powerful, as she may, she shall find a woman in the brigantine equal to all her arts, and far superior to all her threats."

With this prophetic warning on the part of the queen's officer, and cool reply on that of the dealer in contraband, the two sailors separated. The latter took a book and threw himself into a chair, with a well maintained indifference, while the other left the house in a haste that was not disguised.

In the mean time the interview between Al-

derman Van Beverout and his niece still continued. Minute passed after minute, and yet there was no summons to the pavilion. The gay young seaman of the brigantine had continued his studies for some time after the disappearance of Ludlow, and he now evidently awaited an intimation that his presence was required in la Cour des Fées. During these moments of anxiety the air of the free-trader was sorrowful rather than impatient, and when a footstep was heard at the door of the room, he betrayed symptoms of strong and uncontrollable agitation. It was the female attendant of Alida, who entered, presented a slip of paper, and retired. The eager expectant read the following words, hastily written, in pencil:—

"I have evaded all his questions, and he is more than half disposed to believe in necromancy. This is not the moment to confess the truth, for he is not in a condition to hear it, being already much disturbed by the uncertainty of what may follow the appearance of the brigantine on the coast, and so near his

own villa. But be assured he shall and will acknowledge claims that I know how to support, and which, should I fail of establishing, he would not dare to refuse to the redoubtable Skimmer of the Seas. Come hither, the moment you hear his foot in the passage."

The last injunction was soon obeyed. The alderman entered by one door as the active fugitive retreated by another, and where the wary burgher expected to see his guests, he found an empty apartment. This last circumstance, however, gave Myndert Van Beverout but little surprise and no concern, as would appear by the indifference with which he noted the circumstance.

"Vagaries and womanhood!" thought rather than muttered the alderman. "The jade turns like a fox in his tracks, and it would be easier to convict a merchant who values his reputation of a false invoice, than this minx of nineteen of an indiscretion. There is so much of old Etienne and his Norman blood in her eye, that one does not like to provoke extremities;

but here, when I expected Van Staats had profited by his opportunity, the girl looks like a nun at the mention of his name. The Patroon is no Cupid, we must allow, or in a week at sea he would have won the heart of a mermaïd!—Ay, and here are more perplexities by the return of the Skimmer and his brig, and the notions that young Ludlow has of his duty. Life and mortality! one must quit trade at some time or other, and begin to close the books of life. I must seriously think of striking a final balance. If the sum total was a little more in my favour, it should be gladly done to-morrow!"

END OF VOL. II.

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